

LM

CELEBRATING THE OBSCURE AND ESOTERIC!

#3

LUNCHMEAT

VHS LIVES!

BLOOD! TERROR! BABES! MONSTERS!

HURKING INSIDE...

REMEMBERING REPUBLIC SERIALS!
BOX ART FROM HELL!
WORDS WITH DAVID A. PRIOR!
MORE FUN STUFF!



**A NIGHTMARE VISIT INTO THE WORLD
OF PRIMITIVE PRACTICES!**



GREETINGS, VIDEOVORES!!

It's that time again! I hope you came hungry. We have been steadily stitching together this issue over the past couple of months, and I have to say, I think it turned out quite nicely. We learned a lot doing this issue. We learned how to do things more efficiently, how to do things more precisely and most of all, how to keep having fun all the while. That's really the most important thing: fun. That's what these films and everything that surrounds them are to us. And if you are reading this zine, I am sure you feel the same, because undoubtedly, it's all about the movies and the good times they provide.

The one thing that has stood out to me intensely is the sense of community I have experienced and gained while doing LUNCHMEAT. Finding out that people do indeed still care about these films and still want to get a look at them even though the rest of the world has either shunned or forgotten them, puts my glow-in-the-dark heart aflutter. That solidarity is something I hold truly special. These are "our" treasures, and we're all more than happy to share it with whoever wants to join the party.

So, tell your friends, neighbors, and the people you have looked in your basement. If they are already into this kind of stuff, or just want to dabble, we are here to give them a peek. And you can rest assured that we will keep delving deeper and deeper into the terra incognita of the film world. If we didn't, what else would we do for fun? Keep those eyelids peeled and slumped (JS)

LUNCHMEAT would like to thank the following people for being exemplary individuals and excellent friends: Jonathan Canady, Bob and Cherie Schaffer and Ted and Susie Gilbert (superior parental units), Joe Moe, Nathan Arms, Tyler Bilek, Arty Florea, Dino Sorcinelli, Allison Evans, Rob Hauschild, Tanner Toft, M&M Unbelievably Bad, Swan/HSPS, Rick@SlasherClub and The Gore-Mer.

Email questions, comments, suggestions and whatever else you can think of to LunchmeatVHS@gmail.com. We would love to hear from you!

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LUNCHMEAT

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Here are the answers to the AIF crossword in issue # 2:



LUNCHMEAT KITCHEN STAFF



JOSH SCHAFFER
WRITER, EDITOR



TED GILBERT
WRITER, EDITOR



BRIDAL SKULL
BALL AND CHAIN



LOUIS JUSTIN
WRITER



FEMALE VAMPIRE
FAKE BLOOD



TANNER TOFT
COVER ART



JONATHAN CANADY
MR FIX-IT



GIRL VAMPIRE
WEBBED FEET



WEREWOLF
VCR REPAIRS



JAY SPEIS
ARTIST, HIGH FIVES



ROB HAUSCHILD
WRITER



RICK FUSSELMAN
WRITER



BANDAGED HEAD
MMMMPPP!

BLOOD BEACH (1981)

Compass International Pictures

Director - Jeffrey Bloom

Screenwriter - Jeffrey Bloom/Steven Nalevansky

Media Home Entertainment (1981)

When I was a young videorecorder roaming the aisles of my local video shop, it was predominately the box art that made me pick up a video. *Blood Beach* has one of those covers that will suck you in like a tractor beam. I still get a flash of excitement pass through me whenever I see it. This film was written and directed by veteran TV scribe Jeffrey Bloom who was also behind the film adaptation of *Flowers in the Attic* and the little known (and underrated) horror anthology *Nightmares*. This early 80s gem is openly riding the *Jaws* wave with its cleverly appropriated tagline and beach motif, but Bloom throws in an admirably inventive twist that gives this film a bite all its own.

The trouble all starts when an older lady last seen strolling on the beach vanishes mysteriously. In light of the disappearance, the missing woman's daughter comes back to town to get some answers from her old flame who just so happens to be the last person to see her mother alive. The aging, but still pretty, Marianna Hill (*Schindler's List*) plays opposite David Huffman as the reunited pair struggle to find any clues about their missing loved one. After a girl is mutilated in front of a crowded beach and questions remain unanswered, the apprehension of an entire community rests its weight on the shoulders of the local police captain. Luckily for us, the captain is played by illustrious cult hero John Saxon! Saxon gives an outstanding performance and fans of his acting would do themselves a whole lot of good to catch him in this one. He really brings the film to life when he is on screen. Another standout performance is given by Burt Young (*Rocky*, *Chinatown*) as he plays a bitter Chicago cop that has transferred out to the west coast. His salty demeanor and sarcastic tongue supply this film with plenty of laughs that somehow always come back to the notion that stuff like this would never happen in Chicago. It just never gets old.

So where is the horror you ask? It's underneath the beach, of course. Unbeknownst to both the cops and vigilante lovebirds, victims are being sucked down into the sand by some sort of unearthly creature. Most of these scenes aren't as sanguine as one may think (or desire). Personally, I would like to see some red stuff shoot up like a geyser (why isn't that in there?!). As the hapless victims are pulled under. However, we do get a few bloody clips that are fairly satisfying. A dog beheading, which although isn't as graphic as it could have been, is enough to elicit a gratified grunt. Oh, and probably the best scene in the film: a girl narrowly escapes a rape attempt and after the miscreant falls belly down on the sand, he gets his just desserts as he is castrated by the beast below the beach. This scene is heightened retroactively as the news of the bizarre death spreads through town and the local kids have some fun with the cops by tossing a hot dog at Burt Young's character exclaiming that they found his wiener! Crazy kid! Then we have the monster itself. It's original; that's for sure. It's the kind of green and slimy abomination that would make fans of 50s sci-fi flicks smile with appreciation. That said, it does mildly remind me of a super-bloated *Slimer* with an elongated neck. Either way, we get an explosion at the end of the film and that's alright with me!

Ultimately, you really want to grab this film for John Saxon's performance and that scene with the hot dog. Don't get me wrong; there are plenty of other amusing parts of this film, but the aforementioned reasons are why this film should be in your collection. No DVD in sight for this flick, but I scored my VHS copy from eBay for about \$10. They pop up now and again, but those original Media releases are damn slippery.

Josh Schafer

THE FIRST PERSONALLY KILLED WHEN
POUNCE TANGHARUNG KILLS
NEVER EVER SINCE IT START
THE SAME



BLOOD BEACH

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE
TO GO BACK IN THE WATER -- YOU CAN'T GET TO IT.

CASTING: ROBERT YOUNG, JR. (Rocky)
CASTING: ROBERT YOUNG, JR. (Rocky)
CASTING: ROBERT YOUNG, JR. (Rocky)
CASTING: ROBERT YOUNG, JR. (Rocky)



JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE TO GO
BACK IN THE WATER -- YOU CAN'T GET TO IT

BLOOD BEACH



Color 15 Minutes

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the water...you can't get to it...and if you're in the water, stay there.

Both screens for help as the desperately tries to free himself but there is no escape. The usual pattern, like a basketball -- and then nothing. An atmosphere of terror takes over when because known as BLOOD BEACH.

1981 Media Home Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A. 15 MINUTES



DEADLY GAMES (1982)

Great Plains Films

Monterey Home Video (????)

Director: Scott Mansfield

Screenwriter: Scott Mansfield

I often find myself referring to movies in this zine as "curiosities," and with good reason. They are curiosities in that they are interesting and entertaining because of the ways they fall short rather than despite them. *Deadly Games* is another good example of a curious little film. The interesting if ambiguous box art gives us a black glove, a pair of dice with spikes for dots, and a terrified female face inside of a pool of blood, all set against the silhouette of a naked woman. Simultaneously appealing and inconsistent, this box gives a good indication not necessarily of the film's content but of the way it will tempt us with ideas that are interesting in their conception but ultimately a little bit crazy in their overall execution.

The opening scene is pure textbook slasher fare; a beautiful woman disrobes gratuitously on her back porch, and then receives a series of strange phone calls. Before moving into a well done stalk and slash routine the narrative plays around with some interesting ideas as the potential victim admits to her friend that there is something arousing about the idea that someone could be watching her, then the gloved and hooded killer finishes her off. The central story picks up as Keegan, the first victim's sister returns to her hometown in the wake of the crime (which has yet to be confirmed as murder). There she meets police officer Roger Lane who, despite his charm, struggles with a rough past in the Vietnam War and has a morbid fascination with the murder scenes and horror films. The small town is ripe with dysfunctional marriages (everybody seems to sleep with everyone else) and everyone is very fixated on sex. Keegan and Roger start a little fling and Keegan tries to cope with the death of her sister and the small town past that she left behind as more murders spring up around them. The movie's ultimately seems to argue that small town boredom leads to casual sex and murder.

Keegan is played by Jo Ann Harris who appeared in a slew of TV shows from the early 70s through the late 90s; she has an adorable way about her, but it becomes a little much at some points. The cast also includes Sam Green (another TV regular of the 70s and 80s) as Roger and Steve Railsback (Cockfighter, Life Force) as his emotionally disturbed Vietnam buddy. The film also features a particularly odd cameo in which Dick Butkus suggests a 9-way orgy (like I said, curious).

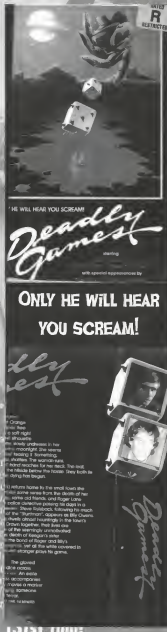
The suspense scenes are good if somewhat infrequent and, although not very bloody, the murder scenes are disturbing and creative. The plot is inconsistent, seeming almost to become a romantic drama at times, but despite this tendency it remains engaging. Some ambiguous subjective camera shots build tension and play with the themes of privacy and voyeurism with which the movie flirts.

Director Scott Mansfield has a rather short filmography (which includes a 1991 production of *The Tell-Tale Heart*) but he must be a horror fan himself as evident through a scene in which Roger, Billy, and Keegan are all in an empty movie theater. Here he treats us (and the film's moviegoers) to a healthy dose of excerpts from the 1932 creature feature *The Monster Walks*. These clips are fun to watch and again, their inclusion flirts in a fun way with the relationship between the audience and the film.

If you wait until the end of the credits you will be treated to a bizarre assortment of trailers from Monterey home video including a VERY 80s work-out video, a Tubea live video, and, easily the highlight, a hilarious trailer for *Dynamite Chicken* starring Richard Pryor.

I found this movie at a flea market but copies seem to be available online though the prices vary. *Deadly Games* will appeal mostly to the enthusiastic cinephile but the uniqueness of the overall production make it a welcome addition to any VHS library.

Red Gilbert



WHITE FANG (1973)

Oceania Produzioni Internazionali Cinematografiche

Director: Lucio Fulci

Screenwriters: Guy Elmes, Roberto Gianviti, Thom Keyes, Jack

London, Piero Regnoli, Guillaume Roux, Harry Alan Towers

Front Row Entertainment (1995)

CHALLENGE TO WHITE FANG (1974)

Oceania Produzioni Internazionali Cinematografiche

Director: Lucio Fulci

Screenwriters: Lucio Fulci, Roberto Gianviti, Alberto Silvestri

Transworld Entertainment (1987)

There is something incredibly appealing to me about the combination of Jack London and Lucio Fulci. I am not sure that any other director has developed a style or tone that would be better fit to convey the harsh and unforgiving qualities of London's northland. What we actually get with these movies, however, is an interesting new angle on the Fulci filmography. In some ways, these are the only Fulci films from the seventies that don't have that stylish exploitation look; they feature slick editing, a mainstream cast, and a somewhat melodramatic score. On the other hand, the children's adventure feel is constantly interrupted in both of these films by brutal violence and very unceremonious deaths. While these movies significantly restructure the original text so that it fits a more conventional good guy/bad guy narrative, they also contain a cynical quality that is undeniably Fulci with perhaps a touch of London.

Central to the London novel is a study of the psychology of a wolf, obviously this would be challenging to bring to the screen so for *White Fang* Fulci and his crew opted to tell the story of a corrupt Alaskan gold mining town called Dawson City. Franco Nero (*Django, Hitch-Hike*) plays Jason Scott, a journalist intent on exposing the crooked mining system, in Dawson City he meets a kind hearted man, Sister Evangeline, trying to build a hospital. In her care is Mit-neh, a sick amput child and White Fang's companion.

Also lurking in Dawson City is the sinister Beauty Smith, who the film elevates from a two-bit swindler to a despicable kingpin who effectively owns the miners by forcing them to sell their gold to him in exchange for promissory notes, unpayable for a year. Smith is played brilliantly by John Stiller (Shock, Rembrandt).

The tension of the film mounts when Smith steals White Fang from Mitchell's father. He keeps White Fang locked in a cage and forces him into dog fights for the entertainment of gamblers. In the culminating fight, White Fang is even pitted against a bear! This sequence is done particularly well; it cuts between the fight and the vulgar excitement of the spectators, highlighting the central tension between civilization and the wild. Although White Fang is a surprisingly secondary character in this film, he remains symbolic of this central tension.

The tape that I own varies in quality throughout. The tones and textures sometimes waver from cut to cut and towards the end the sound quality decreases substantially making it difficult to follow some of the nuances of the plot. The film, however, is worth repeat viewings if that's what it takes to get everything straightened out.

In many ways *Challenge to White Fang* is a rebalancing of the same plot as the original. After publishing his expose to critical acclaim and considerable celebrity, Scott (Nero again) returns to the northland to find more stories to tell. There he finds Slater Evangeline who is still trying to establish a hospital. Finally, Steiner returns to reprise his role as Beauty, although now he goes by the name of Porth and is faking paralysis from the legs down. Needless to say, he is up to his old tricks, and this time he has the local authorities on his side.

WHITE FANG

*A boy and his
dog in the
wilds of Alaska*

Based on the
story by Jack London

A BOY AND HIS DOG IN THE WILDS OF ALASKA



WHITE FANG

**Franco Nero, Vima Ltd,
Fernando Rey and Harry Carey Jr**

The tale of a man and his dog, through the wilderness of Alaska. A scenic outdoor adventure and a rousing drama, based on the Jack London story.



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...THE LAST OF THE VIKINGS...
 ...THE VOYAGE TO SHIVER YOUR TIMBERS? WITH ME AS YOUR...

A young boy named Billy Tarwater takes over for Mit-sah (who is shot down in cold blood at the beginning of the movie). Bill's grandfather finds White Fang at the scene of the murder and brings him home to his grandson who quickly befriends the wolf. After a failed gold mining expedition, Bill and his grandfather return to the town with White Fang were they meet Jason Scott. When Forth/Smith learns that John Tarwater has a map to a hidden gold mine he conspires to take it from him, leading up to a climactic race to claim the rights to the mine. White Fang of course, is the secret weapon in this race.

This Transworld VHS release of this film is certainly of better quality than the Front Row release of White Fang, but it is also the harder to find of the two and it will probably fetch a price between \$15 and \$20 if you buy it on Amazon or Ebay, but Fulci's fans will probably find it worthwhile.

Despite so much reputation from the first White Fang film, Challenge actually proves to be more satisfying on many levels. It is tighter in composition and features a more compelling storyline. This movie ranks as one of the most accomplished films of Fulci's career on a technical level, and these films together would certainly be expected to have the broadest appeal of his whole catalogue.

So what makes these movies interesting to fans of the gory, masochistic nihilism of Fulci's eighties masterpieces? Interested fans should be satisfied on several levels. The most obvious is that these movies, despite their youth oriented facade, are quite violent, in line with both London and Fulci; furthermore, the violence comes in all shapes and sizes. We get a fun Franco Nero fistfight in the first film and an excellent barroom brawl in the second. There are outstanding and shocking animal fights in both films; White Fang fights a bear in the first and an eagle in the second. Other gruesome incidents include amputation, suicide, and arson. In the original, White Fang even mauls an intruder in a sequence that seems to foreshadow the gory dog attack in The Beyond. Furthermore, in true Fulci fashion, violence is always treated without sentimentality, a fact that is even more potent considering the presumably young audience. These movies would likely be as upsetting as they would be exciting to the average ten year old viewer.

The White Fang films also reinforce the notion that Fulci was an exceptionally talented first-tier director. In some ways these movies answer the question: what would a mainstream Fulci film look like? The answer is not altogether clear but it does leave the Fulci fanatic much to ponder about the man's already perplexing career. First, it is fascinating the way Fulci seems unable to escape what some might argue is an unnecessarily violent and uncomfortable vision (though much of the violence can be traced to the source material). This tendency, one might conclude, may have made it impossible for Fulci to find steady mainstream success. This assessment, however, is problematic because he made fairly low-brow comedies for almost twenty years before even entering more extreme genres, and even in the horror genre he made a few movies in his later career that lacked the violent edge of his heyday. Mainstream recognition would certainly have been more satisfying to the director himself who has come to be regarded by his fans as a sort of martyr at the hands of public indifference towards the horror genre. However, that martyrdom is exactly what brings so much popular interest to even the low points (and they get pretty low) of Fulci's filmography. In the end there is probably no satisfying way to define and understand Fulci's career and it will continue to mean different things to different people. These two films, rarely seen by fans due to their VHS only status, represent another, unique window through which one can enjoy and try to understand the controversial director.

CHALLENGE TO WHITE FANG

OLD MAN'S PROMISE...
 A YOUNG BOY'S HOPE...
 A BRAVE DOG'S COURAGE!



Director of Photography: ARNESTO IPPOLITI (s.i.e.)
 Edited by: RENELLA MICHELLI
 Production Manager: PIERO DONATI
 Music by: CARLO BUSTICCHI
 Directed by: LUCIO FULCI

AN OLD MAN'S PROMISE..... A YOUNG BOY'S HOPE..... A BRAVE DOG'S COURAGE!



White Fang, the bravest dog in the Yukon, faces his greatest challenge ever when he tries against impossible odds to help Jason Scott (Franco Nero) keep an old prospector's dying wish to his grandson.

After years of trying a grizzled old man, John Tarwater (Harry Carey, Jr.) discovers a gold mine deep in the frozen wilderness of the Yukon, but dies before he can stake his claim to it.

Instead he wills the mine to his grandson Bill (R. Cessie), but an unscrupulous businessman, Forth, tries to claim the mine for himself. Sister Eva (Vivian Liu) Forth has committed other crime before she can prove ruthless Forth burns the mission and Sister Emma is killed. Blasting their lives a race across the frozen tundra Tarwater's gold mine Jason and the courageous Fang can stop the evil Forth, derring the old man's last

Ted Gilbert EXP
 SLEAZY FIFTH-RATE PORT! CAN'T
 BE CHOOSY UNTIL WE'RE BACK

COVER IN MINUTES
 WITH THE BEST OF THE



little eyes! Ever wish your dreams would

THIS IS INSANE!

HOLD H... DON'T

HELLHOLE (1985)

Arkoff International
Director - Pierre De Moro
Screenwriter - Aaron Butler/Lance Dickson
RCA/Columbia Pictures Home Video (1985)

Fans of women in prison flicks, you just landed on the right page. This little slice of cinematic sleaze is brimming with tons of gratuitous skin, lesbian sexcapades laced with stolen lab drugs, and of course, an unhinged female doctor that performs inhuman experiments on disobedient inmates in a dark and dreary boiler room. Now does that sound great or what? Your damn straight it does. And whether it is intentional or not (probably the latter), this film even manages to elicit quite a few laughs with some well placed expletives and some amusing quips from the players.

Judy Landers (B.J. and the Bear, Dr. Alice) plays Susan. A most hapless girl who after witnessing her mother being strangled to death by a killer known simply as "Silk" (played with greasy style by Ray Sharkey), ends up in a sanatorium stricken with a wicked case of amnesia. She has no recollection of the horrid event and is told that she had a nasty fall and is being held at the institution for her safety while her mother is out of town. You see, her mother was hiding some documents that could very well ruin some big shot, so he hired Silk to go in and find them. Since he never got to the damned things, Silk is sent into the asylum posing as an orderly to try and extract the details from Susan and to make sure that when her memory does come back, he is there to intercept any possible trouble that may stem from those pernicious papers. Silk is the fucking man, by the way. He is cool as ice (and apparently smooth as silk) as he saunters around the halls puffing a smoke, sexing up one of the more ravishing inmates (Edy Williams Oo-la-lal), and of course, stirring up a little trouble in the asylum with another orderly by the name of Stevens.

Stevens is that gooly-goody type and mainly serves as the guy who is out to ruin all the fun. However, he is on the receiving end of some of Silk's best one liners and caustic gestures which make him pull his weights. While the plot shamles on, this film freely injects lesbian encounters, patient freak outs and, yes, even a full-frontal shower scene (that culminates in a nude catfight!) to create fodder for the menacing Dr. Fletcher (played by sultry cult favorite Mary Woronov) as she has her uniformed enforcers drag the inamordinate crazies down to hellhole for her bogus experiments where she jams needles into pretty little necks. Woronov (Death Race 2000, Eating Raoul) is terrific in her role as she adds just enough camp to her character to make it fun to watch without inspiring overwhelming disbelief. It's also worth mentioning that one can infer that Dr. Fletcher uses the failed experiments to satiate her sexual hang-ups. Shit, that doctor really knows how to flex those superiority muscles in the right direction. Trouble comes on the horizon when that cat Stevens (see what I did there?) brings one of his loyal buddies in for a surprise inspection. Will the inspectors uncover Dr. Fletcher's dirty little secret? Honestly, who gives a shit? Bring on more naked crazies!

This film totally kicks ass. It has all the ingredients for a titillating WIP flick mixed with that endearing 80s delivery that makes for one hell of an enjoyable trash gem. Where are these types of films nowadays? Nowhere, I tell you, nowhere! That is exactly what makes them so spectacular. I picked this video up out in California at a second-hand record store for a few dollars. I see it on eBay for about \$10 every once in a while, but I am sure it will only continue to go up. Get it while the get-in's good! The people at RCA/Columbia need to wake up over there. I am beginning to see a dismal pattern with the majority of their video releases. Oh, yeah, I almost forgot: Look for Robert E'Bar as Dr. Fletcher's lead enforcer. He delivers some of the best lines and definitely has Bruce Campbell beat for most commanding chain in horror!



CAPTIVES...STRIPPED NAKED, FORCED TO
SUBMIT TO THE ULTIMATE EXPERIMENT!



Josh Schafer

ING HACK... WACK PAK! A BIT OF BURNING
LEARNING SHOULD START YOU CHURNING, SO

THE BLACK ROOM (1984)

Mutler Crown Productions

Directors: Elyi Renner and Norman Thaddeus Vane

Screenwriter: Norman Thaddeus Vane

Vestron Video (1985)

From the sexually lurid and cryptically morbid opening sequence, *The Black Room* establishes itself as an interesting and well-paced thriller that combines traditional genre trappings with a discourse on the psychology of sex and relationships that is more thoughtful and pronounced than one would expect.

Larry (Jimmy Starthis) is an upper-middle class salesman who presents himself as a loving husband and a dedicated father. It is apparent, however, that his sexual relationship with his wife, Robin (Clara Priznyman), is no longer exciting. In an attempt to fill this void he answers an ad for a Hollywood Hills apartment. The apartment, known as the "black room," is designed to cater specifically to casual romances. The lights are always low and it is filled with candles for a perfect ambience. All Larry has to do is call his eccentric landlord, Jason (Steven Knight), ahead of time and the candles will be lit and the wine glasses filled. What motivations does Jason have to go to such lengths for his tenants' pleasure? Well, Jason suffers from a rare blood condition that forces him to replenish his entire blood supply twice a week and Jason has decided that young, vigorous "donors" are the most effective. Jason and his Sister Bridget (Cassandra Gava of Conan the Barbarian) abduct the young women brought to the room and use them as blood transfusions (although they never seem to find it necessary to test the "donors" for blood type).

There are really two different narratives going on here: the first dealing with the relationship between Larry and Robin, and the second with the vampiric blood theft. The former is actually where most of the interest lies. Larry tells Robin about all of his exploits in the "black room," however, she doesn't think they are real. She thinks instead that the "black room" is a metaphor for his internal fantasies and is turned on herself. Consequently, when Larry begins sharing these fantasies with his wife their sex life begins to improve dramatically. This poses some pertinent questions about the relationship between fantasy and reality. Eventually Robin discovers that the room is real and at first feels foolish, but at Jason's suggestion she decides to play Larry at his own game. This plot turn is also very interesting as it empowers the character of Robin and exposes Larry, through his own jealous reaction, as hypocritical and insecure.

There are also some subtly provocative elements to the other end of the story, although they are somewhat less developed. Jason's weak blood count and sexual ambiguity seem to represent impotence which he compensates for not only by taking the blood of sexually potent victims, but also by photographing them through a secret two-way mirror while they make love. So seems to be equally as attracted to the poetic quality of finding "fresh blood" as he is with his bizarre, supposedly scientific notion that fresh "donors" are more effective than the blood he could get at a hospital.

This film is far from flawless. There are many awkward and unlikely narrative devices even aside from all of the faulty science. For instance Larry brings a prostitute back to the apartment and conveniently leaves her tied-up and blindfolded as he abruptly leaves for a business appointment during foreplay without ever looking into the fact that she is gone when he returns. It is also apparent that the writer introduced fairly complex themes into the film without any idea of how to tie them all in with a satisfactory conclusion seeing as the ending (although exciting) is completely out of place in the context of the rest of the film and was likely created after the filming was over seeing as it consists of lots of quick editing and a voice-over track.

There is no official DVD release of this film although there appears to be a howling version somewhere. The Vestron VHS features decent picture quality and an adequate soundtrack, which is a good thing because the score is one of *The Black Room's* high points. The film is erotically alluring and genuinely exciting and despite a somewhat lopsided narrative it offers a little more substance than usual. Genre fans will also be interested in early hit roles for Christopher McDonald (Ray's Gilmore's Shooter McGavin) and Linnea Quigley (Return of the Living Dead).

Ted Gilbert

THE BLACK ROOM

There is a room for rent
in the Hollywood Hills...
and the tenants
are paying in blood.

THE BLACK ROOM is a product of Mutler Crown Productions, Inc. A Vestron Video production. Screenplay by Elyi Renner and Norman Thaddeus Vane. Directed by Elyi Renner and Norman Thaddeus Vane. Cast: Jimmy Starthis, Clara Priznyman, Steven Knight, Cassandra Gava, Christopher McDonald, Linnea Quigley. Music by [illegible].

THERE IS A ROOM FOR RENT IN
THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS.....AND
THE TENANTS ARE PAYING IN
BLOOD



There is a room for rent in the
Hollywood Hills...and the
tenants are paying in blood.

It would be difficult to believe what goes on inside
THE BLACK ROOM. A fiendish horror awaits those who
enter, but no one would suspect it.

Jason and Bridgette have a need. A need that can only
be satisfied by the unknown occupants of THE BLACK
ROOM. Victims are lured in by the promise of romance,
sexual excitement, but soon the fantasy becomes a nightmare
as the hellish reality of the dark above takes hold.

Jason and Bridgette are always on the lookout for new
"blood" - won't you answer their need?

THE BLACK ROOM is a product of Mutler Crown Productions, Inc. A Vestron Video production. Screenplay by Elyi Renner and Norman Thaddeus Vane. Directed by Elyi Renner and Norman Thaddeus Vane. Cast: Jimmy Starthis, Clara Priznyman, Steven Knight, Cassandra Gava, Christopher McDonald, Linnea Quigley. Music by [illegible].



R

DEADLINE (1981)

Pan-Canadian Film Distributors

Director - Mario Azopardi

Screenwriter - Mario Azopardi / Richard Oleksiak

Paragon Video Productions (1984)

Upon leafing through this rine, you are sure to find an (un)healthy amount of films that pile on the exploitative, shocking and excessive angles of cinema; but to those cinephiles that sometimes like to sit down and watch a film that makes you think while it entertains, this is a great video to satiate that desire. While this flick has all the gore, terror and tensions a quality horror film demands, it also offers an allegory for the negative social outlook on horror in the media and a fatal portrait of a man's thorny descent into utter despair.

Stephen Young (*The Clown Murders*) plays our main character: world-renowned horror scribe Stephen Lesly. Stephen has made a name for himself in the horror business by writing novels and adapting them into screenplays garnering acclaim from fans and media alike. He is at the top of his game. However, amidst this seemingly peachy scenario, Lesly is troubled. His work interferes with his family life leaving his wife and children neglected and frustrated. His kids see him as a sort of familiar stranger. His wife turns to drugs and keeps seedy company. Lesly is asked to speak at his former school and is met with resistance and spite by the students as they spot accusations of peddling filth and breeding violence with his subject matter. This is where the social commentary exists in this film. The argument between Lesly and the protesters illustrates the struggle between those who believe expressing themselves through horrific themes is conducive to learning and understanding human nature and those who think it is simply a cancer on the face of entertainment. It is something to ponder, but being that throughout my life my aversion for entertainment have been made up of what some may deem disturbing, horrific and plainly unusual, I think I turned out okay.

Getting back to the film itself, Lesly's home life continues to fester and his stress level boils him red. Lesly yearns to break from the formulaic bind he has inadvertently put himself in. The actors on the set of his films can't get inspired and he's not surprised. Lesly wants to do something more artistic, more profound; but his agent won't budge and demands that Lesly keep shoveling the same stuff because it's what makes the dough. One of my favorite parts in the film is when Lesly's agent tells him to "stay away from that art house stuff. Leave that to the Euros."

Then tragedy strikes. His kids, left home alone by their binging mother, accidentally hang their little sister while reenacting a scene from Lesly's breakthrough film *The Executioners*. A media feeding frenzy ensues along with complete detachment from his wife and remaining children. He brings home a gaggle of hookers, and intending to impress them, shows them *The Executioners*; the film that started it all. Here is where we start to see him really crack as his dead daughter appears in the film calling out to him for help. This is a remarkably well done scene and really creates the atmosphere that lets us know that Lesly has gone completely over the edge. The end to this film is especially appealing to me because of its dire nature. It punctuates this film perfectly.

At this point you are probably wondering where the gore comes in. That is another brilliant part of this film: it incorporates violent and bloody scenes from his films that serve not only as eye candy, but also as a window into Lesly's mind. One particularly disturbing sequence involves two children playing a nasty trick on their grandpa with some brutal results. I doubt this one will ever make it to DVD, but the VHS is easy enough to obtain. It comes jam-packed with trailers such as *Boarding House*, *Funeral Home* and *The Witching* just to name a few. A musical number from the controversial new-wave group Rough Trade as a band that kills people with their music.

Josh Schaffer

If You Only See ONE Horror Film This Year
Don't Miss...

DEADLINE

STEPHEN YOUNG and EMARON MASTERS
Produced by ROBERT LEEB • Directed by MARIO AZOPARDI

PARAGON
V
VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

HIS OBSESSION WAS TO CREATE THE ULTIMATE
HORROR STORY... HIS CURSE WAS TO LIVE IT

DEADLINE



A famous horror screen writer, faced with an impossible deadline on his next script, finds his personal life intertwined with each scene he writes. In a frenzied climax, reality and fiction become one.

NR
NOT RATED
Parental Guidance Suggested
Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 16

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© 1984 PARAGON - LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

AS THE BLOODLUST RISES
NOSTRILS FLARED IN

there's a hell of a time... to feeling open those bloody little eyes! Ever wish your dreams would

THIS IS INSANE!

HOLD ON! DON'T!

THE ABOMINATION(1986)

Director: Brett McCormick
Screenwriter: Brett McCormick
Donna Michele Productions (1986)

From the bowels of obscurity that is Donna Michele Productions comes Brett McCormick's super-8 splatter film *The Abomination*. First of all, we should ask ourselves why is this film so sought after by collectors? Why are people willing to pay upwards of for \$100 for an original tape? The obscurity is understandable with the film being released on the extremely rare label Donna Michele Productions who released such other schlocky classics as Jon McBride's shot-on-video films *Cannibal Caspourt* and *Woodchopper Massacre*; but the price the film goes for I do not get other than the collectability of the film. While the film is decent, I could think of many other things to spend my hard earned cash on.

The Abomination deals with a psychotic TV evangelist preacher named Brother Foggy. Our main character, Cody's aunt, has an odd obsession with the man and sees him as a god-like being. Cody's aunt is also extremely ill with a tumor and one faithful night Brother Foggy, gleaning at her from the television, instructs her to put her hands on the set. With a few words of God's prayer the aunt begins to hold her stomach and purge out the tumor that is inside her. But what does she do with the tumor? Throws it in the trash can of course!

Now this tumor is not an average tumor; it is possessed by Satan. It somehow finds its way into Cody's mouth while he is asleep. It totally invades his body and gives him the urge to kill and kill and kill. After Cody's brutal slayings are over he doesn't remember a thing and it takes a blood stain on his clothes to even vaguely remember. Cody kills to feed the Abomination. Remember that tumor? Oh yeah, it turned in to a very cheesy looking monster with no face just giant teeth. It is duplicating itself in Cody's body and every so often one more comes out. You can't open a door or even the washing machine with out finding one.

The Abomination was shot back to back with the gore classic *Graveyard of the Redneck Mutants*. After a failed attempt with the comedy film *Tabloid!* McCormick and Matt Devlin decided to make two low budget horror films. Both films were shot for under \$20,000; they are very effects heavy so I am assuming this is where almost all of the money ended up going.

The Abomination was shot on Super-8; a format I hold very close to my heart. At a time when low budget film makers were turning to video, (which looks like shit but has a charming feel all its own) it is nice to see things shot on real film. It is time to this day that film still always prevail over video. Actually, a few sequences, such as those when Brother Foggy is on the television, were shot-on-video (I am assuming due to audio syncing issues).

When you look at the cover for *The Abomination* the first thing you probably notice is the carnage and when you turn the case over and take a gander at the back you see even more. The front cover displays a guy disemboweling himself, next to him we have a girl who looks to be neck deep in organs and, finally, a girl laying down screaming with some sort of organs on her legs. The back is even more graphic with throat slits, decapitations, a hand removal and a decaying skeleton. These pictures do justice to the film, which is pretty graphic. The effects are not amazing but they are not terrible either. Despite the budget, the creatures (abominations) in the film do look rather nice, if a little cheesy. They are basically puppets housed in a cabinet or something similar. It was rather funny watching one eat a full grown person.

If you have a craving to see this film now, there is an out-of-print PAL Region 0 DVD available from Splatter Zone, which is a sub company of Japan Shock. I am guessing that if you look hard enough you can find it for significantly less cash than you would the VHS.

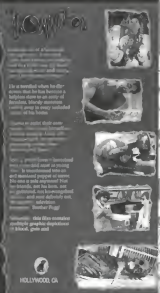
Oh yee, PS...if you do find an actual VHS MAKE SURE you fast forward past the first three minutes of footage. For some odd reason there is a trailer for the film that will give away every gore scene in the film. Nothing worse than having all of the fun spoiled for you before you even start the film!

Louisa Justin



Abomination

TUMOROUS PARASITIC BEASTS ARE
NESTING IN THE BOWELS OF THEIR VICTIMS!



HOLLYWOOD, CA

FILM HOUSE FEVER (1986)

Lions Gate Films Home Entertainment

Director: Domic Paris

Screenwriter: Domic Paris

Video Treasures (1990)

This direct to video clip compilation is a real gem and a definite artifact of a bygone era. The movie stars a young Steve Buscemi (Reservoir Dogs, Fargo) alongside Marc Boone Jr. (Batman Begins), and although the credit is listed on the IMDB as "self" they play Tony and Winnie respectively; just watching these two in this utterly silly shot on video feature is worth the price of admission. There is a wrap around plot and, although it is not much, the effort is very genuine and endearing. Tony and Winnie are two slackers who spend their day lounging in front of a giant wall of TVs watching anything and everything they can (if this doesn't sum up the delirium of the early days of home video I don't know what does). When all of the movies end and the white noise takes over their TV fortress our two heroes are forced to snap themselves out of their video induced comas and try to do something with their lives. It doesn't take long before they come across an ad in a local paper for an all day film festival that reads "all the movies you've always wanted to see but were too embarrassed to pay 3 bucks for." After a bumpy ride to theatre involving "turbo mode" and a pink Cadillac the show is ready to begin.

The festival inside a film is set up as if a real feature was starting. We are treated to a vintage "let's all go to the lobby" ad and then we sink into some trailers including *The Psychic* and *Two Thousand Maniacs*. This sets the tone for the rest of the experience as we will be bombarded by clips from the films of H.G. Lewis and his contemporaries. The editor clearly had a lot of fun with these clips; instead of just playing one by one, they are intercut with each other to create funny sequences and puns. I am not sure I want to call anything here "clever" but there is a sequence with Montag from *Wizard of Gore* that induced a few chuckles.

Aside from nearly all the H.G. Lewis films some of the highlights are *Rocktober Blood*, *Toro Toro Toro*, *She Devils on Wheels*, *Suburbia*, *Daughter of the Sun*, *Warrior and the Sorceress*, and a totally ludicrous *Indiana Jones* parody *Waders of the Lost Park*. The clips are divided into three categories: Gore and the Ghoul, Love and Lust, and Carnage and Chaos. Interestingly we get some commentary from Tony and Winnie as they are grossed out by gore, try to warn unsuspecting victims, and argue over actresses' names. All of this leads up to a pleasingly absurd ending that fits the movie perfectly.

My only word of warning is that the actual tape I have barely even holds up to the usually crazy standards of Video Treasures releases as the sound would only work on one out of the three VCRs in my apartment. Needless to say, I was pleased to discover that there is also a version available from Vestron that features more complete cover artwork and much better sound quality. If you have a choice between the two the Vestron version should be a no-brainer. All things considered, this movie is pure fun; it should only ever be watched on VHS by people who love VHS. If there ever was one, this is our film clip collection!

Ted Gilbert

FILM HOUSE FEVER

Featuring
JAMIE LEE CURTIS, CHARLES GRODIN, DAVID
GARFINKLE, LON CHANEY, JR., JAMES
KEACH, RUSS TAMBLAY, HARVEY KATMAN
and a cast of thousands!



VIDEO
TREASURES

A FILM FESTIVAL LIKE YOU'VE
NEVER SEEN!

A Film Festival Like
You've Never Seen!

1-800-521-1414

FILM HOUSE FEVER

FILM HOUSE FEVER is a hilarious look at the lighter side of movies—an outrageous compilation of some of the best, "worst" films of all time!

Dozy movie buffs, who stoned in the "classic" film "Two Thousand Maniacs" or the popular "ape," "She Devils on Wheels"? What was the name of the killer lawnmower in "Toro, Toro, Toro"? The answer to these and other trivial questions are found in FILM HOUSE FEVER! See your favorite films in moments they would probably like to forget. The worst in horror, science-fiction, suspense, adventure—in a wild, fast-paced look at the wonderful world of movies. Get your popcorn, find a comfortable seat, and get set for the only history of FILM HOUSE FEVER!

Color 69 Min.

WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND PRODUCED BY DOMINIC PARIS

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VIDEO
TREASURES

SILENT MADNESS (1984)

Alni Pictures Inc.

Director: Simon Nachtwey

Screenwriters: Bob Zimmerman, Bill Malling, Simon Nachtwey, Nelson DeMille

Media Home Entertainment (1985)

My rabid Cinephilia drags me all across the filmographic map, from German Expressionism to French New Wave, to Italian Erotica - yet no matter how far I travel I will always inevitably return to the American Slasher. No matter how overdone or reused, this genre will never fail to entertain. No matter how many you've seen, you always want to see one more. Take *Silent Madness* for instance; who reading this right now can honestly say they could pick up this tape and read the phrases "Delta Omega Sorority," "violent carnage," and "frenzied psychopaths" for the umpteenth time on the back of a VHS and not still be compelled to pop it in their VCR!

So what do we have here? Not much originality as indicated by the Bernard Herman rip-off music during the opening credits and the fact that a major character is named Dr. Krueger, but we already knew that and that's not why we started watching, is it? Of course not! We started watching for a delightfully predictable plot line, codes of carnage, and delicious 80's atmosphere; thankfully *Silent Madness* has these in spades.

Dr. Gilmore (Belinda Montgomery) is the one good shrink at a terribly corrupt mental hospital. She discovers that a horrible accident has occurred; deranged Killer Howard Johns has been released in the place of a patient named John Howard. Dr. Krueger, with the help of his sleazy attendants, tries to cover up this debacle, but Gilmore won't stand for it. She traces Johns back to the site of his original massacre, the Delta Omega Sorority. Seventeen years ago, as a convenient flashback informs us, when Johns, a mute imbecile, was working on campus some sorority girls caught him spying on their initiation. Out of revenge, the girls began to seductively tease Johns and humiliate him. Finally Johns snapped murdering all of the girls with a nail gun. Now, a group of young co-eds are hopelessly stranded during a school vacation unaware of the psycho's return. It is up to Gilmore to convince an arrogant detective, a suave local journalist, and a stubborn sorority house mother of the grave danger they are in if they don't act fast.

The plot moves quickly enough to keep us engaged and the characters are drawn out just enough to make it interesting. The gore varies in quality but more importantly there is an obvious effort towards some inventive kills. Without giving too much away, some highlights include a head in a vice and good old fashioned brain drill! This movie was originally presented in 3-D and apparently had the same cinematographer as *Friday the 13th* part 3. Some of the obvious attempts to send implements of murder flying towards the screen seem a little silly on the flat VHS print, although I'm not sure they would have looked too much better in the 3-D version.

I won't try to pretend that all of the plot elements make perfect sense, but they do get us from one kill to the next so you might as well sit back and indulge in all of the incoherent excess. There is at least one other VHS release available with different cover art and there appears to be a DVD out there, although it is out of print. To the best of my knowledge, however, no other release includes the tagline: "There is a Sound You'll Hear When the Screaming Stops." *Silent Madness*, which neither has anything to do with the movie, nor does it make any sense. Enjoy!

Ted Gilbert

WHEN THE SCREAMING
STOPS...

Madness



STORY BY
BOB ZIMMERMAN
SCREENPLAY BY
BILL MALLING
DIRECTED BY
SIMON NACHTWEY

ALNI PICTURES
A DIVISION OF
MEDIA HOME ENTERTAINMENT

THERE IS A SOUND YOU'LL HEAR WHEN
THE SCREAMING STOPS...
SILENT MADNESS

Madness



BELINDA MONTGOMERY STEVEN LASKER

SKULLDUGGERY (1983)

Wittman / Richter Films Inc.

Director - Ota Richter

Screenwriter - Ota Richter / Peter Wittman

Media Home Entertainment (1984)

Through my years of fervent and virtually ritualistic movie watching, I find it difficult to recall a film that has simultaneously bewildered and entertained me quite like *Skullduggery*. Out of curiosity, I skimmed a few reviews (from IMDb, so take it as you will) that gave this film the well-worn tags "worst film ever made" and "so bad it's good". It's easy to see why this film could be lumped in with the aforementioned categories with its laughable dialog, incoherent plot and downright absurdity; but there is something alluring about this film. It's not that "so bad it's good" charm either. It's different. This film is absolutely bizarre.

The iffy plot centers on Adam who is the victim of an ancient family curse that has something to do with the devil and makes him prone to murder. Adam and a few of his friends play a Dungeons and Dragons style game in the back of the costume shop where he works. The game starts to bleed into reality for Adam and he commits acts of murder to advance in the game. That's about as coherent as it gets, folks! People start dying in lackluster ways, and Adam is tormented by the curse which urges him to kill. Now there is straight forward comedy sprinkled throughout the film up to this point with sex jokes ("wanna' see me suck a Greyhound bus through a straw?) and cheesy one-liners, but things start to get really ridiculous when Adam kills a woman and a "put your hands where I can see 'em" bit takes place, but it turns out to be the television in the background. Things continue to get even more ridiculous as the film employs someone in a gorilla suit that is sexing up a nurse and a guy that randomly appears in scenes with a game of tic-tac-toe on his back. With every appearance, he gets another mark. It is never explained why either of these two characters are in the film.

We also get arbitrary scenes of a man putting together a puzzle. The puzzle is the painting from the opening scenes and I suppose it is meant to symbolize Adam being taken over by the curse bit by bit. While that sounds like fair symbolism, it fails in execution. There is also a jester doll that appears to signify danger and is assumed to hold the spirit of the curse when it is not taking shape of a sly and taciturn magician. The best kills (and even those aren't great) happen when Adam goes to a costume party (how convenient) and must kill the "demons" that are threatening his position in the game.

So what is so alluring about this film? It's the utter ambiguity of it. You really just can't tell if this film is self-aware or not. It rides the line of parody and ineptitude seamlessly. Are they making a bad film that is so lousy it vaguely seems like a spoof, or are they making a spoof that is so wry that it blurs the lines enough to make it indistinguishable? Ultimately, it's the confusion that compels you to keep on watching because you just never know what is going to happen next.

I have watched this film multiple times and I still can't say for sure what this movie really is. I like to think that this film doesn't want to be figured out. It wants to be that anomalous flick that presents itself as a horror film, but is cloaked in the way that only a select few will give it enough attention to see something else besides a poorly done fright flick with a gorilla. Either way, this is an entirely watchable and amusing slice of cinematic obscurity and belongs in your collection. I snatched my copy from eBay for a couple of bucks. I always see it for under \$10 and since this is probably never making it to DVD, that's a great deal. For me, one line from the film sums it up: "It isn't blood...it's ketchup!"

Josh Schafer



IT STARTED AS A GAME...UNTIL
DEATH STARTED PLAYING!

Skullduggery

Starring
THOM HAVERSTOCK + WENDY CREWSON
+ DAVID CALDERISI

They're playing for power over Evil...but Evil has the power over them!

In the haunting shadows of a dimly lit back room, five clandestine players gather for a mysterious, medieval board game where merciless warlocks battle for ultimate occult power!

But some thing is playing—and it's no longer just a game. Some unspeakable evil is manipulating an unwitting player to play out a blood-betraying copy of unremitting horror.

Are the murders real or part of a mystic and more terrifying game? The challenge is yours in this chilling fantasy, laced with devil worship, reincarnation and medieval sorcery.

Let the game begin!

Color 95 Minutes
Produced by PETER WITTMAN and OTA RICHTER
Directed by OTA RICHTER



MEGAFILMS
PRESENTS

DEATH KISS (1974)

Joseph Brenner Associates Inc.
Director: Kostas Karagiannis
Screenwriter: Thanos Leivaditis
Prism Entertainment (????)

The Original English title of this film was the more accurately descriptive *The Rape Killer* but Prism apparently thought this was too lurid a title for the home video market so they went with the more generic *Death Rage*. Neither the new title nor the cut-and-paste box art manage to do justice to what is actually quite a solid thriller. The film is a Greek take on the Italian Giallo Formula; while it lacks a bit in acting and character development, it delivers a well paced, engaging story, some moments of style and atmosphere, and above average sadism and perversion.

The plot is familiar: a dissatisfied husband, Jim, hires a hit-man, Mike, to murder his wealthy wife, Ellen, so that he can inherit her fortune and marry his (younger blood) mistress, Laura. There is no mystery here, instead it is the type of film where we already know the ending and enjoy the ride. The element of this film's story that is uniquely disturbing is Jim's choice of hit-man; he hires a man he knows to be a deranged rapist who gets pleasure from molesting women and then strangling them to death. The idea is for the murder to look like the other sex-crimes for which this killer is responsible, this way Jim will be free of suspicion and he can also give the cops false information, throwing them off the trail of the real sex maniac. What is even more disturbing is how Laura is o.k. with this whole plan (there isn't much sympathy handed out to anyone in this film).

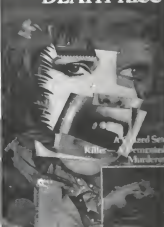
The one exception to the otherwise cardboard acting is Vagelis Selline's performance as Mike. This killer is truly despicable; he is compulsive and deranged and the façade of sophistication and class that he wears does little to hide his inherent ugliness. The rape sequences are mechanical, relentless, and repulsive. He even seems to achieve more sexual fulfillment from wringing his victims' necks than he does from raping them. At times this character crosses the film out of the relatively "fun" brand of Gallo style violence and into the more unsettling "last house on the left" style depravity.

On a technical level the film deserves some compliments; the pacing is solid, shots are well constructed, and the score by Vannia Spanos balances suspense, decadence, and brooding atmosphere. The film contains some more stylish moments such as Ellen's dream sequence. Interestingly, a hidden chamber in Mike's house where he commits some of his crimes takes on an almost gothic atmosphere, like the torture chambers found in British period gothics. Accordingly, Mike's sadism is more aligned with that of an 18th century Baron than with the typical sexual degenerate of this era of film.

There is nothing particularly compelling about Friga's packaging of this release, but the image and sound quality are good, there is also a lengthy and entertaining trailer for Thunder County before the feature. For those interested in European thrillers this movie comes highly recommended and this VHS release seems to be the only way to watch it. Collector's, however, are probably more interested in tracking down the Outraguous Rape Killer theatrical one sheet than this relatively mundane VHS box.

Ted Gilbert

DEATH KISS



A CRAZED SEX KILLER - A DEMENTED MURDERER



A Crazy Sex Killer: A Demented Murderer

The table of contents is available at <http://www.nrc.ca/nrc/eng/1462.html>.

[illegible]

The police believe that Miller will be out of the country and a warrant has been issued for his arrest. Miller, he says, is a fugitive, he police estimate the killer probably was in a chamber of horrors and the police believe he was.

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MUTANT HUNT - (1987)

Empire Pictures

Director: Tim Kincaid

Screenwriter: Tim Kincaid

Wizard Video (1987)

The insanely awesome box art for this cartridge o' cheese proclaims that this film is "too goaty for the silver screen"; but us video nerds know that line was just another clever device used to lure the unsuspecting viewer (gotta love it!). This flick is a direct-to-video stab from the brain of Tim Kincaid. He's the same guy that brought us *Breeder* and the low-budget trash-terpence *Robot Holocaust*. He's also the same director that made a huge impact on the gay porn industry with his influential adult films. He took a break from his adult filmmaking in the late 80s (much to the surprise of the adult industry) to churn out the aforementioned sci-fi flicks along with this one: a hideously cheap, but somehow effects-driven sci-fi that would make Fred Olen Ray proud!

After a man known simply as "X" injects a drug called Euphoron into the latest in cyborg technology called Delta - 7's, the juiced-up cyborgs get murderous and start to run amok around New York. Euphoron is a drug used by humans that evidently fucks you up and gets you all horny, but the introduction of the drug into the cyborgs makes them "kill for pleasure". The scientists that created the Delta - 7's see the danger in what X is doing and decide to call in a ruthless mercenary named Riker to eliminate the killer cyborgs. Now Riker is that calm, cool type and apparently has a reputation that everybody respects and fears (could have fooled me). Riker calls in some of his buddies to assist with the mission, but X's ex-partner, Domina, steps into the picture and complicates things. X has been hoarding all of that Euphoron and she wants a share for herself. Domina has a project of her own and she is out to prove one thing: anything X can do, she can destroy. Riker and his band of cohorts sniff the Euphoron trail to find the man in charge.

Lots of poorly choreographed fight scenes fill the bulk of this film, but they are great to watch for their sheer awfulness. My favorite is when one of Riker's female associates does a full spin only to do a regular kick! It's totally great! The acting is forced and the dialog is laughable, but again, it's fun to watch. The real treats in this film are the effects. Lots of green slime (they are cyborgs remember), gnarly circuitry and nasty make-up are clearly where the entire budget went. One particularly impressive effect is the cyborg that jolts back to life and captures one of the scientists. It is actually really adeptly crafted and is the most believable thing in the film (and I am counting all of the actor's performances). Another great scene is when one of the villains gets set on fire and their head pops up for just a minute, but then falls back down in defeat. It made me chuckle!

This is great stuff for fans of 80s sci-fi trash. Tons of goey, drippy bogus science induced terror that is sure to give you your fix of cheese. You can also see how Kincaid was riffing on the zombie kick of the time as the cyborgs move more like the undead than robots. This is cheap stuff for sure, but it's that kind of sweet smelling garbage that isn't as bad as it could be. I see this tape pop-up on the internet (where I grabbed my copy) once in a great while, but I have never come across it for sale in person. Unless Charles Band finds it in his heart to give this flick a DVD release, I don't think it's coming anytime soon. It just makes the VHS that much sweeter.

Josh Schafer



NEW YORK: THE 21ST CENTURY.
IT'S OPEN SEASON ON CYBORGS.



When New York is besieged by mutant cyborgs with an insatiable lust for ripping human beings apart, it's dedicated mutant hunter Matt Riker to the speedy rescue! A diabolical scientist, "Z" has injected these mechanical zombies with a sexual narcotic that induces a thirst for killing. At once Manhattan, the robotic Remora begin loving, war and leaving 'em... dead.



With two truly mutant-hunting pals, Riker descends into the dark tunnels beneath the city to find Z's secret lab. Killer attacks with revolutionary laser! The mutants are clamoring for more of the demonic drug! How can Z's plans going for world domination? Not so hot. It's a terrifying fight to the finish as you'll discover when you knowings for danger on the MUTANT HUNT.

10 minutes

Starring RICK GIANASI MARY FAHEY RON REYNOLDS
TAUNIE WHITTON Produced by CYNTHIA DE PAULA
Directed by TIM KINCAID



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W (1983)

Cinex Films

Director: Willie Milan

Screenwriter: Willie Milan

Paragon Video Productions (1985)

Wow! Where do I possibly start on this one? I've really never seen anything quite like *W*. The film is a Philippine Mad Max copy that abounds with gaping narrative holes and instances of complete disregard for logic, yet it is oddly compelling throughout most of its runtime.

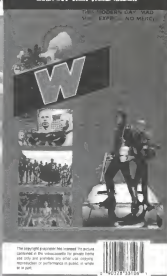
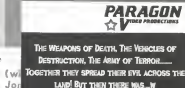
A summary of the plotline would be completely useless here so instead I'm going to go through the main characters one by one. W2 (Anthony Alonzo) is the titular character, he is an "enforcer" (seemingly just a glorified cop) who has been suspended from the force for his combative attitude towards the administration. On the bad side we have the handsome gentleman from the VHS box to our right, a druglord / cult leader / military commander / hypnotist named Nosfero (Johnny Montez). Nosfero runs the biggest Opium ring in Asia and also happens to harbor a grudge against W2 who is apparently responsible for the death of his brother. Nosfero is not the top dog, however; he answers to Praxis (Paul Vance), the ringleader of a cryptic military organization known only as The Syndicate. Nosfero's character is sufficiently badass in appearance; dressed mostly in black with an imposing cape, he channels a very Darth Vader-esque quality. In contrast, Praxis is nothing but laughable as his superior, he is a bald, scrawny, white dude and all of these qualities are accentuated by the ridiculous black leather vest that he wears, the character seems more like Rick Moranis's Dark Helmet (This obviously would have meant nothing to an audience at the time because *Spaceballs* was made in 1987, but the unintentional irony gives the movie a big boost in my eyes).

The makers of *W* were clearly quite confused about what type of movie they were making. It borrows heavily from the post-apocalyptic genre, however there is no nuclear back-story and it I'm not sure it is even set in the future. Instead of using the typical anti-hero lead character, the makers opt for a "hard-boiled" police officer approach to the story. The resulting "hardened cop" vs. "army of machine gun wielding, mohawked, Rob Halford impersonators" dynamic that results is a bit awkward to say the least.

The one-on-one combat is horrendously choreographed and the acting is atrocious (when a child's death evokes more laughter than sympathy you definitely have a problem). During the last third of the movie, however, the crew seemed to get it together. When I say this I don't necessarily mean that the quality gets better, but the dialogue pretty much ceases and the film is basically all explosions, machine gun fire, and car crashes from this point on.

The Paragon edition that I have is of pretty crappy quality. The image is blurry, it jumps from time to time and the sound is awful. My ears are seriously still ringing because I had to turn the volume up so loud to hear the dialogue over the loud buzz that occurs for the duration of the movie. There may very well be better preserved copies floating around, but I haven't found an edition other than this one. Depending on your tastes *W* is either pure gold or a piece of crap, I'll leave that decision up to you.

Ted Gilbert



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ZOMBIE NIGHTMARE (1986)

Gold-Gems Ltd.

Director - Jack Bravman

Screenwriter - David Wellington

New World Video (1987)

This slab of Canadian home video excess firmly resides in the IMDb's worst 100 films of all-time. It being bestowed this dubious honor compelled me to yank this video (which I picked up years ago at a flea market) from my collection and give it another go. First off, you have to give it respect for even ranking without a DVD release. That's saying something, right? What that something is, I am not entirely sure. It probably didn't hurt its recognition that heavy-metal giants Motorhead are on the soundtrack (along with other lesser known rock bands) and that this film has some name actors in Adam West and an early role for Tia Carrere; but schlock cinema fans will be excited to know that Jon Maki Thor (*Rock n' Roll Nightmare*) plays the titular zombie (yes, Thor is on the soundtrack!).

The prologue to the story shows us the ideal Dad coaching baseball and walking his family home afterwards. He spots two hoodlums at asking a young girl, pulls her from danger, but gets stabbed and perishes in front of his wife and son. Years past and Jon Maki Thor plays Tony: the son now grown up. He is a hulk of a man and follows in his father's footsteps playing ball and thwarting evildoers. Unfortunately, he is run down in the street by a group of delinquent teenagers out on a joyride (in a Mercedes no less!). The leader of the gang, Jimbo, is that reckless rocker type sporting a switchblade and is one of those "tough" guys that you just love to hate. The rest of the gang consists of all the usual suspects: two sporty 8-bags and two little hotie girlfriends (one of whom is played by Carrere). After the hit and run, Jimbo flexes his leather gloves and revels in the fact that it was that easy to take a life. Yeah, this guy sucks.

Tony's lifeless body is brought home to his mother and she is devastated. She calls on the help of the local voodoo priestess, who just so happens to be the same girl that her husband saved all those years ago. As one could expect, Tony's corpse is re-animated and is now out for vengeance against those dastardly teens! He wastes no time and brings down the chander with his trusty baseball bat. Funny thing is, all of the teenagers' deaths are being reported as drug overdoses and suicides rather than brutal neck-shapings and blunt force trauma. Seems that the local captain (played snugly by Adam West) doesn't want panic breaking out across the community and takes advantage of these kids being total degenerates. Eager to close the case, the captain pins the murder on some brute (the same guy from an earlier robbery scene) and the case is closed. Or is it? A hard-boiled cop is determined to find out what the hell is really going on. And just who is this captain really? Looks like he's got some problems of his own!

Even though this film is technically bad, it's entirely watchable and I dare say enjoyable. The pacing is fair, the kills are decent (slow motion rule!) and the acting, though fairly cardboard, is enough to get you through the film without wanting to cut your own head off. Adam West (and his moustache) are amusing to watch and Tia Carrere does her best. Pick this up if you can find it for cheap. I believe I paid one dollar for it: deal-o-rama! This VHS version comes with a short trailer for *Dead End Drive-In* before the feature. I want to find the soundtrack on Lp. Now that would be sweet!

Josh Schafer

ZOMBIE NIGHTMARE

VHS



HER POWER GOES BEYOND LIFE...
HIS RAGE SURVIVES EVEN DEATH.

HER POWER GOES BEYOND LIFE...
HIS RAGE SURVIVES EVEN DEATH.



ZOMBIE NIGHTMARE

ZOMBIE NIGHTMARE is violence and violence, terror and suspense, and a revenge that concerns death itself! Tony Washington kills a robbery at a local grocery store only to be run over and killed by a group of teenage suburban teens. But the horror has only begun. For in the darkest recesses of Tony's backyard, a voodoo ceremony takes place which will unleash a supernatural avenger.

One by one, Tony's ruthless killers are graphically and brutally murdered on Tony's supernatural zombie takes on horrible head-cand. The story is set for a showdown between the baffled authorities and the zombie as the final rise from the grave in a bone-chilling climax!

From beyond the grave comes the ultimate nightmare... **ZOMBIE NIGHTMARE!**

GOLD GEMS PRESENTS **ZOMBIE NIGHTMARE** STARRING ADAM WEST, TIA CARRERE, JON MAKI THOR, FRANK GLEZ, LINDA SINGER. MUSIC BY MICHAEL RIZZI. PRODUCTION BY JIMMY M. HAZARD. EDITOR: FRANK GLEZ. COSTUME DESIGNER: GLENNY HILTON. SPECIAL EFFECTS: ANDREW C. RUI. PRODUCED AND WRITTEN BY JACK SHAWDON.

MYSTERY

WELCOME TO

PLANET STORIES

Planet Stories: Fall, 1946

When WAS arrived in the late 1960s and subsequently blew up in the early 80s a new era of media exploitation was born. Video rental stores began popping up in droves, their shelves filled to the brim with movies made available for public consumption for the first time. It's so secret to our readers that releasing companies often relied on lurid and sensationalistic artwork along with intriguing taglines to entice eager customers to pick up obscure and often low quality titles. This phenomenon was hardly new, however; in fact the exploitation of the fantastic to mass markets dates at least back to the Penny Dreadfuls of 19th century England. The concept continued to reach new heights as paperback publications took off in the early 20th century, but it was the American science fiction and fantasy pulp magazines of the 30s, 40s, and 50s that saw it through to glorious fruition. Not only were these magazines hard boiled belief (you could find more nudity on the covers of Weird Tales than in any gentlemen's magazine for years to come) but they also tapped into the imagination and fears of several generations of readers in a startlingly visual manner. The writing and artwork in these magazines remain fun and fascinating in today's world and furthermore they are fun to collect (like so many forgotten VHS titles, lots of these volumes are difficult to find elsewhere), so each issue of this rare's array of admirable publications. This month I will take a look at the Fall 1946 issue of Planet Stories.

Surely the audience for pulp science fiction stories was well aware of the old adage "never judge a book by its cover." Luckily the publishers of these anthologies didn't believe they put too much stock in it. Since the cover is where any pulp reader begins the experience, so shall we. This issue of Planet Stories features a beautiful illustration from Chester Martin. Martin was hardly a prolific pulp illustrator, but he was responsible for most of the 1946 Planet Stories covers. Martin's covers brought more of a fantasy quality with them rather than the traditional sci-fi motifs such as ray-guns and spaceships. This particular cover also takes a more symbolic and expressive approach than normal (i.e. the clock outlines on the background and the miniature people hanging limply at the hands of an enigmatic goddess). It's certainly enough to make any lover of the fantastic open it up to take a look inside.

This magazine features seven stories (five shorts and two novelettes) and a brief feature covering the first post-war science fiction convention. The first short story, "Enter the Nebula" is a somewhat juvenile comic style secret identity / mystery mash up set on Mars. It was written by Carl Jacobi who had a healthy career writing in all pulp genres. "The Revellent," the one and only story from William J. Matthews is a story of drug addiction in the Martian deserts. The next tale, "Total Recall" by Larry Sternag, is one of the more interesting shorts in this issue. It is set in a galaxy on the brink of being swallowed and the only thing that can save them is the formula for a certain poison, destroyed by its discoverer because of the potential danger it posed. The only hope is for the scientist to use an experimental device to travel back through his stored consciousness and retrieve the formula. The fourth story, written by Leroy Verha and called "Through the Asteroids" to tell, has a title that is probably more exciting than the story itself, which is a fairly clichéd tale of loyalty and redemption that, nonetheless, has a certain charm to it. "Six Tuesdays" was probably one of the more enticing stories in this volume as it was written by none other than who was well published

although he fell short of wide-spread popularity. "Six Tuesdays," although a little unclear in parts, is a clever little time travel story in its own right.

The real prizes of this issue are the two novelettes, "The Dread Flame of M'Tonak" and "The Creatures that Time Forgot" by Henry Kasso and Ray Bradbury respectively. It seems appropriate that Kasso and Bradbury share the headlining honors here because Henry Kasso actually co-wrote Bradbury's first published story

"Pentium." Kasso's story is an engaging adventure set on Mars (including a pal war?). The Martian dictator, Bar Vargo has been secretly developing a deadly weapon that feeds off of the energy in human minds, and it is up to our hero, an outlaw named Ketrak, to stop him. Though abundant in the projected anxieties of the times (nuclear war comes to mind) and well-worn characteristics that seem to draw on Edgar Rice Burroughs in particular, this is an engaging story that certainly would have given readers what they were looking for. The Bradbury piece is undoubtedly the real gem of this collection. Published later as "Frost and Fire," The Creatures that Time Forgot is an undeniable classic. The story is somewhat atypical in scope for Bradbury in that it is set almost entirely within the parameters of an imagined world. It is the story of a planet where the lifespan is only a mere eight days, and the intense proximity of the sun causes the days to be unbearably hot and the nights to be frigid, forcing the inhabitants to spend most of their short existence inside dark caves. Our hero, Sim, sets out on an impossible quest to reach an mystical ship far in the mountains with the hope, derived from a faint hereditary memory, that it will prolong life. Intensely moving in its undeniable humanity, this story strikes an emotional nerve that no one can hit quite like Bradbury.

Of course the stories and artwork aren't the only thing that make Pulp magazines fun; the advertisements also gave a breath of life back to a hypogaea era, shedding some light on the readers who may have held this very copy in their hands over sixty years ago. The most enjoyable is the ad for Teller for Males found on the back page, reminding us that the primary target for science fiction was the male demographic who was equally interested in the other mysterious and unknown topics. While some things certainly stay the same, it's also funny to notice how others change; for example, I imagine you would have a hard time selling this book today if you advertised it as "gay inviting hushie stories!"

Ted Gilbert



David A. Prior

Interview by Rick Fusselman
Originally published on Slasherclub.com

Rick Fusselman: For people who are unfamiliar with you work, could you tell us about yourself and what you do?
David A. Prior: I am an independent film maker who has made more than 30 features so far. More info on me can be seen on my website www.davidaprior.com

RF: What made you want to make a slasher film?

DAP: At the time I thought it would be the cheapest and easiest thing to do. I was wrong though. Slasher type films are more difficult to make because if you are going to make them right they require a great deal of night shooting and mood lighting and all of that takes time and money. This is a big mistake that many first time film makers make.

RF: Was it hard to film and edit on video?

DAP: Shooting it was easy. Editing it was very difficult because nothing really worked. The editing process was where "film school" really started for me. That's where you learn what you did wrong and that in itself teaches you how to do it right.

RF: How did you come up with the concept for *Sledgehammer*?

DAP: Don't know really. I just came up with an idea of a crazy killer with a sledgehammer.

RF: It has been rumored that *Sledgehammer* was filmed on the Paramount back lots is this true?

DAP: *Sledgehammer* was primarily shot in my apartment at Venice beach and then at a farm house out in the valley no back lot.

RF: Has the thought ever come across your mind to do a sequel?

DAP: I do not think there is a big enough audience for a sequel to this movie. I would be more inclined to remake it, as a much better film, then to do a sequel but I doubt that either will ever happen.

RF: You are also responsible for making another 80's slasher classic, *Killer Workout*. How was filming this different from *Sledgehammer*?

DAP: *Killer Workout* was a "Film" shot on 35mm and that is an entirely different process, but what I learned on *Sledgehammer* and *Killzone*, which I did before *Killer Workout*, certainly helped me out a bit.

RF: After *Sledgehammer*, you did *Killzone* and then *Killer Workout*. Why did you choose to go back and do another slasher?

DAP: This is a simple one. The man who hired me to make this movie, who later became my partner, (David Winters who was one of the Jets in the movie *West Side Story*) wanted a movie about murder at an aerobics studio. And he called it "Aerobi-Gide" as a play on the words Aerobics and Homicide. He threw the idea by me and I came back to him in one week with a script and said let's make a movie. He was impressed and we did it.

RF: Where did the concept for *Killer Workout* come from?

DAP: From my employer / soon-to-be partner David



David A. Prior with Kristi Pearce, one of the stars of David's 2006 film *Zombie Wars*

Winters. He had a loose idea and I wrote the script from that.

RF: How did you come up with the idea for the killer's main weapon to be a giant safety pin?

DAP: Using the giant safety pin was an idea of my brother Ted's. Somewhere he had seen one and thought it would be a cool weapon and it was.

RF: I really enjoyed this movie; I thought it was a fun slasher. Did you have fun making it?

DAP: Making this movie was very hard work actually. There is always some fun involved in making a movie but most times it is just hard work. We had to go into that gym every night after closing and be out, with all equipment, every morning before opening and that made it very tough.

RF: Was there a local gym that let you shoot the movie in it?

DAP: It was a local gym owned by someone we knew and he was given a small role in the movie in exchange for using it. He's the guy the hot blonde sits on in the locker room and taken off her top. His name is Richard Bravo.

RF: Marcia Kerr was awesome in her role, are you still in contact with her at all? And what was it like to work with her?

DAP: Marcia Kerr was fantastic to work with. She was actually a person we hired to work as our casting director and along the way we realized that she would be best for the role. She was a great person and a lot of fun to work with. I do not know what ever became of her. I had a huge crush on her for a while but instead ended up dating the lead bloke, the one who took her top off in the movie (Trish Adams). And yes, she was as hot as she looks in that movie.

RF: Do you think the person who owns the rights for this movie will ever decide to put it out on DVD? And if asked, would you do special features for it?

DAP: I don't know who owns the rights anymore. It was sold as part of a large package of movies, which includes most of the movies I have made. No telling if it will ever come out on DVD, but I am sure it will because several of the others have recently. Like *Raw Nerve* and *Center of the Web*.

RF: Your brother is every one of your films, starting with *Sledgehammer*. How is it to have your brother work for you?

DAP: Ted has not been in all of my movies but a lot of them. I used him because it was convenient and after a while he became a very solid actor and that is why I continued to use him. Ted and I have always gotten along well and we work together well, too. There are many of my

movies that Ted has not been in but he has worked as my assistant director.

RF: Killer Workout was shot on film; did you enjoy shooting on film more than on tape?
DAP: Shooting on film is more of a creative process than shooting on video. At least it was in those days as it presented more of a challenge and therefore was more satisfying to make than Sledgehammer. I would say that Killer Workout has more sentimental value to it because I did enjoy making it and it became the catalyst for the beginning of A.I.P. Productions, under which I made many, many more movies.

RF: How has the industry evolved from the early 60's until now?

DAP: In the 80's the industry was all video; now it's all television, and that is world wide. Also, slashers have a very hard time in foreign markets. They do not like the blood and guts very much and it is very easy to get censored in many countries nowadays.

RF: Have you ever considered doing a horror convention to meet fans of your films?

DAP: I have never done a horror convention but I would like to... it sounds like fun.

RF: What are you currently working on? And how can we find out more about it?

DAP: Very recently I have partnered up with John Graham, who is famous in the Karate world as being one of the very few 9th Degree Black Belts in Kung Fu in the United States, to do a movie this spring which I am writing now and is called Fight Chance. This movie will co-star the famous Bill "Super Foot" Wallace and is the story of a twenty year old, down-trodden kid who signs up to fight in a cage fighting tournament because he needs the money. And the old folks at a retirement home he works at use their wisdom and life experience to help train him. It is sort of a Rocky / Karate Kid story, the classic underdog tale. In short, it's a story with a lot of heart.

RF: David, in closing... do you have any suggestions or helpful hints to any low budget directors or writers who are floundering?

DAP: A list of helpful hints for low budget filmmakers could easily be a book in itself. One thing I would say for sure is to learn how to edit before you direct. If you do this, you will not make the usual newbie mistakes.

RF: David, I thank you for this interview. It means a lot to me. I hope to hear back from you soon.

DAP: If you have a poster or flyer you want signed, just let me know.

RF: Thanks again

I would like to thank David A. Prior again, for doing this interview. While doing this interview with him we talked nearly every day for about 2 weeks. This man is an inspiration to any low budget filmmaker. And if you would like to help David with his current project you can contact him at dprior@centurytel.net, and please tell him that Slasher Club sent you.

David A Prior's

KILLER WORKOUT

The plot of this mid-eighties slasher is about as simple as they come: hot blondes are being done away with left and right in a trendy gym, who could be the killer? It's actually quite brilliant... In a slasher film kind of way; it's even a bit shocking that the scenario hasn't been exploited more within the genre. The main character is Rhonda Johnson (Marcia Karr), manager and partner of Rhonda's Workout. Rhonda is an aggressive, no-nonsense, businesswoman and it is no surprise that when Detective Morgan (David James Campbell) begins investigating a series of murders in the gym, Rhonda's main concern is keeping the bad publicity to a minimum. Things get interesting when a private investigator sent by Rhonda's partner discovers that one of the gym members has a crush on Rhonda that isn't quite as innocent as it first appeared. Is this creepy sweetheart the killer, or are the murders somehow connected to an ambiguous tanning salon accident shown at the beginning of the movie?

This film was shot on a noticeably low budget, but it's a bit more capably directed than one might suspect. Aside from the uneven casting and cheesy dialogue that are standard fare for direct to video slashers, the downsides of this film are that some viewers will probably find the mystery a bit obvious and, though the body count is fairly high, there isn't a whole lot of blood. Nevertheless, this movie manages to smuggle itself tightly into its own little crevice in horror cinema history.

One of the most unique aspects of the film is the murder weapon: a giant safety pin. While it looks ridiculous, it certainly earns the filmmakers some creativity points. Watching a grown man die instantly from a safety pin to the forehead is priceless; I could probably even get into a discussion on the unintentional irony of replacing the traditional hyper-phallic slasher weapon (knives, machetes, chainsaws, etc.) with such an absurdly diminutive one within the uber-macho gym setting, but I'll refrain.

The film lays on a heavy dose of absurdity, which I appreciate. Virtually every character (man and woman) is sex obsessed. The movie not only revels in objectification, but objectification itself is the focus of the movie. On the subject of both absurdity and objectification... a good chunk of the film's 89 minute runtime is occupied by mesmerizing shots of a women's aerobics class that make younger viewers like myself wonder: did people EVER really dress like that?

While watching this movie I was also struck by the number of choreographed fistfights. Though the fights are over the top and a bit laughable by most standards, you still get the sense that these are athletes who had some idea what they were doing. It made me realize that there must have been tons of these juice-heads living in LA with acron star aspirations who, at the time, actually got a shot at being a fourth rate van-damme or Dolph Lundgren thanks to low budget outings like this one.

All the aforementioned criteria, combined with a delightful 80s dance score containing song titles like "Woman on Fire," "Knockout," and "Animal Workout," make David A. Prior's Killer Workout an indispensable 80's time capsule and an endearing example of independent filmmaking.



Ted Gilbert

MONSTERS™



**A LAUREL PRODUCTION
(1988-1990)
WORLDVISION HOME VIDEO INC. (1991)**

When I wasn't watching those essential video rentals or late night cable flicks, it was shows like *Tales from the Darkside*, *Amazing Stories*, *The Outer Limits* and of course, *The Twilight Zone* that gave me my fix of the weird and wonderful. And now that *TtTDS* is finally getting a DVD release coming this February (courtesy of Paramount), it just leaves one horror series from my childhood that is in desperate need of a DVD release.

Organized and established by heavy-hitting horror producer Richard P. Rubenstein (*Dawn of the Dead*, *Creepshow 2*), *Monsters* came into existence directly after the cessation of Rubenstein's aforementioned TV series *Tales from the Darkside*, but gained more exposure when it aired on The Sci-Fi Channel in the 90s. With that unforgettable intro featuring a family of monsters about to snack on some "banded critters" and watch their favorite show, *Monsters* possessed that low-budget feel, but continually had outstanding make-up effects, quality actors, and stories that just stunk with you.

There was just so much talent flowing through this show: make-up effects extraordinaire Dick Smith (*The Exorcist*, *Scanners*) served as make-up consultant and brought on such names as John Dods (*The Deadly Spawn*, *Ghostbusters 2*), *The Chiodos Bros.* (*Critters*), as well as countless others to offer their talents and craft the titular monsters. Actors like John Saxon, Linda Blair and even Steve Buscemi would show up on episodes giving them that little something extra; but most importantly, those stories were fun. They had that tinge of dark comedy that somewhat lacked in Rubenstein's *TtTDS* series.

There are three seasons (72 episodes) of this show, so this is just a smattering of what this series has to offer. The tapes written about here are the few that I have managed to find over the years. I don't see them around very often, and I am not totally sure that all of the episodes are actually on video. Luckily, you can find some episodes on YouTube.com along with the Japanese version of the show's intro (which is awesome). If I may recommend a couple episodes, "The Jar" and "Glim-Glim" are two outstanding episodes and are sure to give you a glimpse into the remarkable world of *Monsters*. Shhhhh...it's starting!!



Reaper/Desirable Alien - (1989/1991)
Writers - Josef Anderson/ Edythe Swasen
Directors - Jean Patenaude/ Bette Gordon

Based off of a story by Robert Bloch, "Reaper" spins that all too familiar tale of making a desperate bargain. A selfish, dying man in a nursing home strikes up a deal with the Reaper in which he must supply three souls in the place of his. He thinks of some clever ways to dish out the death, but they always seem to go awry causing more damage than he intended. Barbara Billingsley (*Leave It to Beaver*) plays the nurse that becomes his love interest and fuels him to keep on killing to prolong his life. This episode displays a clever connection with the first and last scenes of the episode that brings about a killer twist. That Reaper sure knows how to do business!!

"Desirable Alien" is about an immigrant by the name of Hercules Valvelotis that is yearning to become a U.S. Citizen, but is reluctant take the physical that will finalize the deal. His uncanny power over women has enabled him to come his way through the red tape thus far, but now a resolute caseworker is intent on exposing him. She finds out his "big" secret, but is no match for his charms. She's no pushover, though; she's got that loophole handy and she knows how to use it. Chuckle inducing sexual euphemisms abound and prolific character actor Luis Guzman gives a good supporting performance. Look for the ravishing Debbie Harry as the substitute doctor. She always has the best bit parts.

Cellmates/The Demons - (1990/1989)

Writers - David Odell/Martin Olson and Robert Sheckley

Directors - Stephen Tolkin/Scott Alexander

A cocky, rich boy American (Maxwell Caulfield) is thrown into a jail cell after carelessly racing through the streets of Mexico and killing a young girl. Caulfield kind of overacts as he spits forth puerile slurs like "bean breath" and "taco head" at the prison guard, but it's enough to make you dislike him (which is good). The seasoned Percy Wayne portrays the mystical and wise man in the cell next to the Caulfield's character and attempts to impart some knowledge on the visitor, but he is too smug to listen. Shit, even the lawyer that comes in to help can't stand him; this guy is a real douchebag. Talk of demons comes about and Caulfield's character is chained to the wall for trying to escape. Fans of the cult classics *The Stuff* and *The Incredible Melting Man* will enjoy the effects. The twist at the end sets up speed racer for a permanent holiday.

"The Demons" is a more comical episode. Well, at least it tries to be comical. However, I will admit that these jokes were probably a lot more potent when I was 7, but just a head's up. Richard Moll (*Night Court*) plays an alien with a hunger for drest (that's gold for all you non-alienists). He decides to summon a demon to do his bidding. He uses a substitute ingredient (what the hell is a screllum?) and botches the spell. Instead of a demon, he gets his dimensional counterpart Arthur Gammet, an insurance agent from Earth. He charges the earthman with the duty of finding the gold, so Arthur decides to call upon a demon for himself. Another debacle ensues and flat comedy is rampant. Thankfully, not all of the jokes miss and the make-up in this episode is really inventive and well executed. Plus, you learn a lot of insurance jargon.



The Feverman/One Wolf's Family - (1988/1990)

Writers - Neal Stevens/Paul Dini

Directors - Michael Gornick/Alexander Kama

"The Feverman" was the first episode of *Monsters*, and is definitely one of my personal favorites. A decided period piece, it concerns a desperate father that, against his family physician's wishes, brings his dying daughter to a faith healer. The healer is a haggard, drunken man (well-played by David McCallum) that is neither proud nor jovial. There is some clever dialog in this episode that is sure to elicit some thought as the healer counters the doctor's ridicule. Perhaps the most impressive quality of this episode is the monster itself. It is the embodiment of the sickness that is ailing the child. It is greasy, blobby and ridden with tumors; it is totally disgusting and effective in its role. The final scene is the passing of one man's life and the start of another's. This is most definitely a morality tale (as are quite a number of these shows), but this one is done exceptionally well.

"One Wolf's Family" is a quirky entry in this show's history. Starring the Stiller family (sans Ben) it is an allegory for acceptance and tolerance. A family of werewolves that has come to America from "the old country" is about to have their daughter (Amy Stiller) become the bride of a were-hyena. The father (Jerry Stiller) is furious that their daughter wants to marry out of her "race", but the mother (Anne Mearns) insists that is the way of the old and he must adapt. There is also a nosy neighbor that pops in to annoy the family every once in a while. Dinner with Stanley (the were-hyena) goes terribly, and a heart-to-heart discussion unfolds between the mother and father. This dialog has strong undertones advocating equality and acceptance and brings the father wolf to his senses. Stanley scores extra points when he brings the nosy neighbor to... er, for dessert. The werewolf make-up and body part props in this episode are excellent.

JOSH SCHAFFER

CLAMSHELL COMPULSION!!

An Interview with Filmmaker, Zine Publisher, Film Archivist, and Classic VHS Connoisseur Keith Crocker

By Rob Hauschild

I first had the pleasure of meeting and interviewing exploitation renaissance man Keith Crocker for my own zine in 1998 about his Super 8 feature freak-out *The Bloody Ape*, and by then he had already clocked in nearly 20 years making short films and publishing his seminal fanzine *The Exploitation Journal*. The *EJ* would go on hiatus 4 years ago after nearly 30 issues that chronicled a decade of digging in mom and pop video stores for the best of horror and sleaze on tape. Crocker is also the brains and brawn behind the long-running Cinefear Video, a former mail order outfit now alive and kicking on the internet, providing collector copies of rare and out of print trash and treasures from his personal stash of thousands of clamshells, sell-throughs, beta bombs and import oddities on VHS.

Our paths would cross again when Keith completed *Slitzkrieg: Escape from Staling 69*, a feature film that pays tribute homage to the Nazi-exploitation films of the 1970s like the *Flas* series, *SS Hell Camp* and many others. We would work together to release both *Slitzkrieg* and *The Bloody Ape* on DVD this year through Wild Eye Releasing. As a result, I would also be witness to his monstrous and meticulous collection of rare VHS that resides in his home and at a few secret storage facilities in Long Island, New York - all from long buried labels like Wizard, All Seasons, King of Video, Neon, Continental, Agelance, Unicorn, IFS, Super Video, et al - and each tape representing over 20 years of VHS collecting, a hobby and healthy obsession he agreed to share with me and the fine readers of *LUNCHMIX*.

ROB: What was the first VHS you remember renting?

K: My earliest memory as renting Doris Wishmans' *The Amazing Transplant* on the old EVC label (Electric Video Corporation, who operated out of Hicksville, Long Island). I rented it from a mom and pop store called Pictures and Video. They were smart and went out of business in 1985, long before video stores started to lose money.

ROB: What was the first VHS you recall buying for your collection?

K: It was *Night of the Living Dead* on the Media label. I was only able to buy it because it was on sale for \$25 at the time, which was low and unheard of. It's a Beta and yes, I still have it.

ROB: What were the best places in your area to get used or new VHS tapes?

K: Renting wise, I was smitten with a place called *Inwood Video*. Once again, this was a mom and pop. It was located in Inwood, NY and it was near Far Rockaway, which was an urban nightmare. However, because it was so close, *Inwood Video* tended to stock some of the sleeziest movies you've ever seen. I rented the Thriller videos *Make Them Die Slowly* and *Buzzed Alive* from there.

And I had to wait weeks to get them. The place went out of business in '92, and I bought quite a few of their titles.

ROB: As a renter/buyer, what attracted you first to a VHS tape, the art or the description on the box?

K: I'd go into Video Shack, one of the first video stores on Long Island, and I'd salivate over all the movies they offered. This was in the late seventies, and I didn't get my first video machine until 1983, and it was a Beta. Those Wizard Video big boxes caught my eye; like a bug to light, I was drawn right in. The oft-misleading European artwork was the real selling point.

ROB: What was the most deceptive VHS you bought based on the box art?

K: Once again, I'm going to cite the Wizard boxes because they often used pre-existing art from other Euro horrors to sell some mighty boring cures for insomnia like *Jesé Franco's The Screaming Dead* and *Virgin Among The Living Dead*. Those boxes were better than the particular versions of the films that were being offered.

ROB: Were you ever surprised by a VHS you bought?

K: Sure, movies like *Pets* or *Centerfold Girls* turned out to be treasures, far better than the box art would have you believe. I'd say there were more hidden treasures that were bypassed by customers because of poor box art.

ROB: Are there any VHS tapes that have different footage than subsequent DVDs?

K: Hell yeah! *Marlock Moon*, *Fight For Your Life*, so many issued on DVD only to find out later on that they are missing footage, which in turn makes the tapes more collectable.

ROB: What were your favorite VHS companies to buy from?

K: They all seemed so good. Wizard, Thriller, Media, Lightning Video, Force Video (which was an offshoot of Wizard), Transworld Video, Imperial Video, which operated in Farmingdale, LI. Imperial gave us *Pets*. I think they also gave us *Jesé Franco's Barbed Wire Dolls*. Videatrix, which gave us the *Flas* films. Best Film & Video, which carried all the Harry Novak stuff like *Mantis In Lace* and *Mad Butcher*. In fact, Best Video actually offered double feature horrors on one tape. Most folks think all that stuff was put out by Something Weird, but that stuff saw the light long before, and in most cases the transfer was better. Best was located on the North Shore of Long Island. Small world, isn't it?



R: Who had the best box art or box presentation?

K: Any company that dealt in clamshell boxes, because they could fit some delicious poster art on their boxes.

Monterey, MP1, Midnight Video (initially an X-rated label), Select-A-Tape, that dabbled in cult films like the Andy Milligan titles), Video Home Library, they were great, put out *Daughter of Horror* and *The Ghostly Ones*. They also put out a TV print of *The Flesh Eaters*.

R: What companies had the worst transfers/ presentation of films?

K: Sometimes, Lightning Video would transfer films in too dark a setting. *Burial Ground* is a perfect example of that, very hard to see on VHS. Video Yesterday, which existed before Sinister Cinema, their stuff looked like it was projected on a wall and shot with a video camera, but they had some rare stuff.

R: Where was the weirdest place you ever found VHS?

K: Yard sales. One guy was emptying the contents of a whole video store. I found *Criminally Insane* there. For a while there, in the early 90's, all you had to do was look in a trash bin and find videos. Really, there was too much product and not enough space to store it.

R: Tell me about the legendary, now closed, store WHOLESALE LIQUIDATORS IN NYC.

K: Great place on 14th street in New York City. That's where I used to buy the Mexican horror films on the Mexicana video label. Some of those are worth a small fortune. And they were cheap then, nine bucks new and sealed. Also, the *Overstockers* on 27th St. - I picked up *El Inquisidor* there for nine bucks. That store closed too after the owner died.

R: What were the average prices for VHS when you started to buy your collection?

K: Most places like Inwood, when they were going out of business, where selling the titles for \$5.99 a piece. Bear in mind that they paid \$30 to \$100 for these videos wholesale at the time, so having to sell them for five or six bucks was killing them. I actually remember one store owner crying while folks were buying them out at four bucks a title. It must have been tough if you owned a store. By the late 90's I was getting stuff at about a buck apiece. It was unreal.

R: What is your favorite big box VHS in the collection?

K: I'm the proudest of the Midnight Video Milligan films, *Bloodthirsty Butchers*, *Torture Dungeon*, *Man With Two Heads*. They used original poster art on those. Very tantalizing, if you were a horror fan your mouth watered when you saw these.

R: What do you think is the future of collecting VHS clamshell tapes?

K: I think you said it best once Rob, they are like vinyl records, at one point in time discarded but now making a come back. As time goes on the value will rise, and God knows what some rich jerk will pay for a title such as *Headless Eyes* on Wizard Video.

R: How did some of the movies you were buying back then influence your fanzine and the movies you have made?

K: The influence was profound. First off, the 'zine was born because the video stores offered so much material to review that the bulk of the films covered in *The Exploitation Journal* between '87-'97 was straight off the video store shelves. And we weren't being bribed by companies to review their product the way that fan sites on the Internet operate these days. This was simply really caring about the product and wanting to promote without any kind of motivation other than to turn people on to alternative, non-Hollywood mainstream product. And certainly a steady diet of exploitation films seen in the theater, on cable and video influenced the type of films I would be making through my college years to the present.

R: How does someone go about collecting VHS tapes or clamshells today?

K: The major cities are pretty much cleaned out, but in small towns, especially down South or in the Midwest, there still exist video stores holding on for life. Most of those folks will let titles go if you see something that appeals to you.

R: What is the most you ever paid for a VHS tape?

K: \$30, and that was on eBay.

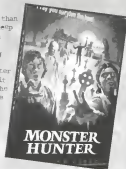
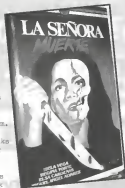
R: What is the best deal you ever got on a VHS or batch of VHS tapes?

K: I won a box of about 80 foreign VHS tapes on eBay for \$9.99. On top of that, the seller was on Long Island and I drove and picked up the tapes. Turkish films, French films, German films - all exploitation, horror and action. Obviously, it was written in the cards that I should have this!

R: Is there any advice you can give fans to go out and collect and find VHS tapes besides the Internet?

K: Buy cheap, and don't get suckered into spending more than a tape is worth on the web. Keep checking yard sales and flea markets. Those are the best places to find folks dumping their old videos. The more rundown the area is, the better chance you will find. Enjoy it and really love the films, the box art, that old video store smell. This should be a passion, not a pain!

(Keith, his films, and 'zine back issues can be found at www.cinefear.com)

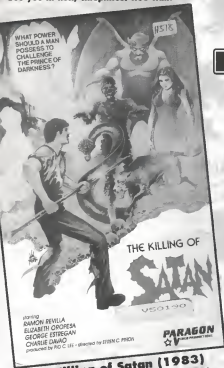


LUNCHMEAT'S S FAVORITE



SATANIC COVERS

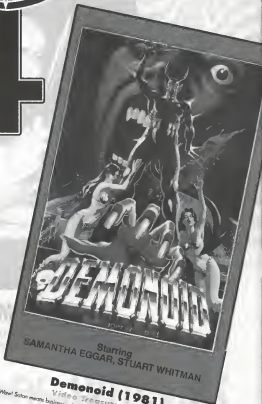
There is only one thing in the world better than awesome VHS box art... **awesome SATANIC VHS box art!** Here are our five favorites. See you in hell, cinephiles! Hee-Hah!



Killing of Satan (1983)

Paragon Video Productions (1983)

Not only does this guy have to fight Satan, he also has to rumble with a zombie, an alluring spirit, a nasty serpent, and a pissed off hound from hell! We have a feeling that muskache will give him the strength to go the extra mile.



Demonoid (1981)

Video Treasures (1988)

Wow! Satan means business. Look at those Pringles! Into blinis! This cover makes us want to sacrifice something. Watch out for that severed hand!

The Demon Lover (1976)

Unicorn Video Inc. (1976)

Frazzini was clearly an influence on this cover, but apparently the artist was also into hip-hop culture. Look closely, we think the wizard is pledging allegiance to the Westside. Satan looks like I've doesn't approve, which somehow makes it even better.



THE DEMON LOVER

Produced by...

Produced and directed by
JACKSON/JERRY YOUNKINS

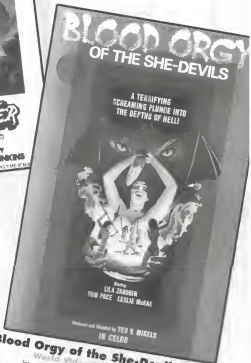
WFO OFFICIALS RATING: T-14, 17, 18, 19



Satan's Dog (1986)

World Video Pictures, Inc. (1989)

If Satan had a Dog we certainly hope it would look like this - A Dumbly Spoken mixed with a Crier mixed with our favorite Ghoul. This thing is not as fun!



BLOOD ORGY OF THE SHE-DEVILS

A TERRIFYING
SCREAMING PLUNGE INTO
THE DEPTHS OF HELL!

Starring
LILA ZAROVIN
YOUNG PACE LESLIE MURRAY

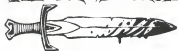
Produced and Directed by TED V. NIKELS
IN COLOR

Blood Orgy of the She-Devils (1972)

World Video Pictures, Inc. (1989)

Satan always has the hottest chicks, but be careful not to cross their path or you might end up like the poor sap in the middle of this sadistic ritual. Man, knife wielding satanic women rule!

VAMPIRES FROM HADES. MOVIES FROM HELL



When HORROR goes FANTASY

I'm not sure if it is my current fascination with modern fantasy writers like Neil Gaiman and Jeff Vandermeer, or the undeniably epic first track on the new Zombi record, but lately I've been going through a bit of a fantasy phase. Fantasy is a genre that horror fans either seem to love or hate. Our fascination with the unusual and the absurd drives some of us straight to the ultimate escape that the genre offers, while others of us are instantly repelled when the "supernatural" is replaced with "magic." But what happens when we get a curveball? When popular trend dictates to our most beloved horror heroes that they will make a fantasy epic? Mario Bava, Bert I. Gordon, and Lucio Fulci have each gone down this road, with mixed results. When we look at these films in relation to the rest of their directors' career, as well as in relation to the other films of the genre, I believe we can learn something about why we love the movies we love and maybe even make a case for these films that are often overlooked even by the biggest advocates for the filmmakers in question.

First up is Mario Bava's 1961 film *Hercules in the Haunted World*. Though he cut his teeth on plenty of these traditional Pepla features (Cinematography and effects for *Hercules Unchained*), Bava is better known as the godfather of Italian horror - yet *Hercules in the Haunted World* is quintessential Bava from the lighting to the atmosphere, all the way to the subtle comic wit.

Hercules, played by Reg Park (who apparently inspired Schwarzenegger to become a bodybuilder) returns from a battle to find that his bride to be, Daianara, has lost all her senses at the hands of the gods. A hypocritically psychedelic oracle tells Hercules that his only hope of saving Daianara is to bring back a stone of forgetfulness from Hades. Hercules sets out on his journey, accompanied by a hopelessly foolish Telemachus and a painfully vain Theseus.



Bava's Hades is really marvelous to look at, I swear, even if you're turned off by all of the sword and sandals spectacle, just staring at the glorious gelid, fog soaked, flames spewing underworld is well worth the price of admission. Along the way Hercules and his companions fight against a stone-monster, cross a river of lava, and are even pursued by zombies.

If Bava's impressive effects are the first attraction for horror fans, the second is Christopher Lee who, though disappointingly dubbed by another actor, makes one of his least recognized, but still potent, contributions to the annals of vampire cinema. Lee is the sinister King Licos who plots to become immortal by sacrificing Daianara to the gods and drinking her blood in a delightfully gothic

take on the classic mythology.

While watching this film I am struck by how much Bava must have loved the project. It may be that it was the only movie of his career where he was truly given free range, at least visually. While, trapped by some of the narrower plot elements of fantasy, and more specifically the peplum (an impossible quest to save a damsel in distress, for example), Bava was also liberated to make an entire world that looked exactly as he wanted it to look. In the realm of pure fantasy there seem to be no limits on what an audience is willing to accept, something that is often oddly untrue about the horror genre.

Bert I. Gordon, famous for making movies with small budgets and big monsters, made his foray into pure fantasy with the 1962 film *The Magic Sword*. Instead of Greek mythology, this film loosely adapts the medieval story of St. George, a Christian Martyr who slays a dragon to save a princess. *The Magic Sword* is an intentionally comedic take on the medieval legend. In the film George is a sheltered orphan who has been raised by Sybil, a somewhat clumsy sorceress. Upon learning that her adopted son has fallen in love with Princess Helene, and that Helene has been kidnapped by the evil Sorcerer Lodac (Basil Rathbone), Sybil attempts to distract George by showing him the magic sword, magic armor, and magic knights that he will inherit in just one year on his 21st birthday. Convinced that he could use these items now to save Helene, George tricks Sybil and locks her in an underground vault that he opened with the sword (it opens doors in whatever surface it touches). George sets out to rescue the princess accompanied by his band of Knights. George still faces some problems; for one thing Lodac is guarding Helene with seven curses, and for another, Sir Branton, who also wishes to take Helene's hand in marriage, is not happy to have the competition.



Along the way we are treated to corny jokes, chivalry galore, and a handful of oversized monsters (at is a Gordon film after all), all culminating in a battle between George and a two-headed dragon which is by no means impressive but still a lot of fun.



Like Bava, Gordon did many of his own effects, and as with Bava's film we get the impression that Mr. BIG must have enjoyed his experience as well. Although not really restrained in any of his other giant creature films, all concerns for reality and plausibility are tossed out the window in *The Magic Sword*, and questions like: how do we make a human being huge or tiny? and how do we explain it? are replaced by what do we want the giant Ogre to look like?

For what its worth, this movie also has the distinction of being one of a handful of *Mystery Science Theatre 3000* films that are considered by the shows writers to be watchable on their own. While it could be the comedy that allows some viewers to watch this film more objectively, we might also speculate that it's the fantasy of it that makes viewers more willing to embrace 50 feet tall monsters over a colonial man even though the effects are arguably better in the case of the latter.

Though it doesn't quite pertain to the topic, most of our readers would probably like to know that *The Magic Sword* also features a rarely seen performance from Hilla Nurmi (A.K.A. Vampire).

Now, to jump somewhat haphazardly into the 80s, this decade saw the world of fantasy cinema bombarded by another fantasy icon: Conan. With the box-office success of John Milius' 1982 Frazer's inspired epic, *Conan the Barbarian*, it's no surprise that the Italians jumped on the band-wagon. During this period Fulci was coming straight off the heels of a series of gore-filled gothic masterpieces (*The Beyond*, *City of the Living Dead*, *House by the Cemetery*). Attempting to capitalize on the recent wave of barbarian fever, he brought us *Conquest*. It is a barbarian film that takes place in an imaginary pre-historic world filled with a slew of animal-human hybrids and undead monsters. Our hero is a boy named Ilias on a quest for manhood armed with a magical bow. Along his journey he meets a nomadic barbarian named Mace who shows him the ways of the foreign land and saves him from danger on many occasions. Our villain is the evil sorcerer, Ocron (made through the entire movie), who fears that Ilias will defeat her with his magic bow, and therefore wishes to rid him from her land.



Though the film fits the horror-goes-fantasy theme of the other two films discussed here, *Conquest* is a little more difficult to discuss in context. While other Fulci films of the period are hailed as masterpieces, this one is often written off as sub-par or celebrated as so bad it's good and unfortunately it doesn't have the comic gloss that the Bava and Gordon films have to help ease the skeptical viewer. In his book *Beyond Terror: The Films of Lucio Fulci* Stephen Thrower writes:

It's as if the scriptwriters started out trying to fuse the comic-strip mysticism of Conan, the pre-historic world of *Quest for Fire*, and the monsters of Fulci's recent work into some warped new concoction... and then got bored and went out instead.

This is probably fair on some level, the film lacks a story of any real interest, the aesthetic lacks definition and character relationships are often ambiguous and awkward. All this being said, it is interesting that Stephen Thrower praises other admittedly mediocre Fulci films like *The Black Cat*, and *Murder Rocks: Dancing Death* for being some of the more purely enjoyable films from Fulci's filmography, despite their shortcomings. It seems to me that if *Conquest* is anything it is enjoyable to watch from a purely illogical perspective; it is as if the movie is one outrageously gory set-piece after another. It features actors being ripped literally limb from limb, drug-snorting bear-creatures, cob-web monsters, and yes, even some zombies.

It seems that ultimately this film gets the uneasy reactions that it does because it breaks a simple rule: it lets the fantasy dictate the story and not the other way around. To clarify, it feels to the viewer as if all of the narrative elements and character interactions are structured around the individual fantasy set pieces, making the story entirely impertinent. I would argue that fantasy, because of its "anything goes" characteristic is really the only genre that can feel us into thinking we are supposed to be watching a story, thus frustrating any viewer trying to identify themes and relate to characters. Once we let ourselves appreciate *Conquest* as a purely visual spectacle we can enjoy it much more.

All of these movies have quality DVD releases and are not difficult to find, yet they still seem to elude much of popular discussion. I believe they represent a stepping off point for horror fans who have yet to delve into the world of sword and sorcery cinema. There are still many oddities of the genre (especially from the Italians) that have never seen a proper DVD release and rest assured, I will make it my duty to bring more of those to you as Lunchmeat continues its mission.

Ted Gilbert



REPUBLIC SERIALS

THE ECHOING FOOTSTEPS OF A HUMBLE GIANT

Spanning from the 1930s to the late 1950s, Republic Pictures produced or facilitated the production of a little over 1000 films and movie serials. Republic came into being as a collective of six smaller Poverty Row studios (Majestic, Liberty, Invincible, Monogram, Chesterfield and Mascot) that churned out above average B films and serials, but were most noted for their Trucolor westerns such as *Sunset in the West* (1950) and *Johnny Guitar* (1954). These westerns became Republic's calling card and were given extra attention (and budget) as they featured such resounding names as Roy Rogers, John Wayne, and none other than Gene Autry: The Singing Cowboy; but besides handing out some of the stoutest westerns ever to grace the silver screen, Republic also created an immense collection of awesome serials throughout their tenure as a company. These serials ranged in theme from crime stories to jungle adventures and featured some of the most enduring characters in entertainment including *Superman*, *The Lone Ranger* and *Flash Gordon*.

For the uninitiated, a movie serial is essentially just like a regular movie, only it's broken up into segments (usually 12), and was shown in the theatres as an additional attraction. Showing them in this way would entice viewers (mostly kids) to pay admission at the same theatre next week to see if the hero makes it through peril. Each segment, averaging about 15 minutes, would include a forwarding of the plot and leave the audience with a "cliffhanger". The next segment would run back the last minute of the previous segment to refresh the viewer's memory, but add in an additional scene that was previously absent, usually displaying a daring escape from said peril (soooo many leaps of faith from moving vehicles).

A good number of Republic serials have made it to DVD by either by lumping them together on saver DVDs or tossing them on Public Domain discs as extras (*The Phantom Creeps* is a threadbare and prime example). However, there are an insane amount of these that are either only available on video or otherwise nowhere to be found. I have been lucky enough to obtain the *Zombies of the Stratosphere* and *The Crimson Ghost* tapes over the years and it excites me to present to you these enjoyable entries in the science-fiction and crime genres, respectively. I have seen some fan DVDs of these two series' on eBay, but they have yet to receive a legit release. Hopefully, someone will pull it together and give these rad pieces of cinematic history a broader reach. Cue the giant eagle!!

Zombies of the Stratosphere (1952) Republic Pictures
Director - Fred C. Brannan
Screenwriter - Ronald Davidson
Republic Pictures Home Video (1988)
"Martians Invade the Earth"

Originally written to be an installment in the popular serial *Commando Cody: Sky Marshall of the Universe*, a last minute change in character names wound up creating this comparatively sub-par but altogether amusing sci-fi serial. The delightfully absurd plot involves Martians coming to Earth and scheming to detonate an H-bomb to blast Earth out of orbit so the dying planet Mars can supplant Earth's spot and thrive once again. The Martians team up with a couple of thugs named Roth and Shane and blackmail a Doctor into doing their bidding. The main problem is procuring the uranium to facilitate the detonation of the bomb. Judd Holdren (*Commando Cody*) plays Larry Martin: the guy who is out to stop these dastardly aliens. He is armed with his steel intuition and that trademark rocket pack that enables him to soar right to the point of action!

Through the chapters, the Martians make multiple attempts to snatch some uranium, but Martin and his cohorts continually foil their plans which results in a ton of stray gunfire (only one person actually gets shot in the entire



IT'S A HAMMER FILMS CROSSWORD EXTRAVAGANZA!

Complete the crossword with the correct answers and send it to the address below. Anyone and everyone that sends it in completed will receive some sort of surprise goodies! For those of you who choose not to deface their zine, photocopies are entirely acceptable. Remember, all of the answers are related to HAMMER FILMS! Good luck, fiends!

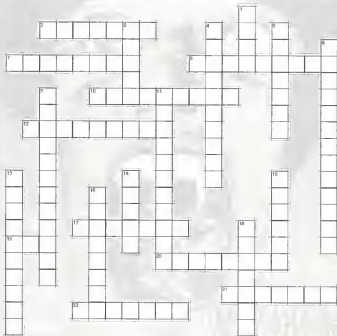
Lunchmeat

C/O The Crossword Troll

710 Glendalough Rd

Erdenheim, PA 19038

Be sure to include your name, address, and t-shirt size! The Troll demands your entry!



Across

2. This Fisher always had a great cast
7. Peased Hammer's bits
8. To the Devil, Hlaus' daughter
10. The World forgot them
12. Oliver Reed is this film's titular psychotic
17. Taste his blood!
19. Count Christopher
20. This monk was mad!
21. Hammer unleashed a plague of these
22. Hammer's go-to ghoul

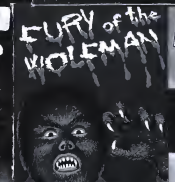
Down

1. Hammer's voluptuous vampire
3. Of Frankenstein, the Werewolf and the Mummy's Tomb
4. Britain's serialized scientist
5. Morell played Watson to his Holmes
6. This Bond girl was also a virginal vampire lover
9. He must be destroyed!
11. Made blood bright red
13. Frankenstein's Elizabeth
14. Prehistoric scream queen
15. Its stare will get you stoned
16. Literature's original lesbian vampire
18. Countess Dracula





Produced by JENNIFER ASSHEIM
WRITER • SHELLEY WINTERS
BO HOPKINS
Directed by JENNIFER ASSHEIM
"TACLES" STARRING: CAROLANNA, CESARE DANOVIA
THOMAS AKINS in "TACLES"
Executive Producer DAVID ALBERTS
Produced by JENNIFER ASSHEIM
Screenplay by JENNIFER ASSHEIM
Directed by JENNIFER ASSHEIM
Color print by MOWBLES





hypocrite



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